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In this small book the author traces the development of the doctrine of Christ out of the religious experience of the early disciples, which is enshrined in deathless language in the New Testament, to its intellectual formulation by the Greek mind in the historic Creeds. The weakness as well as the strength of these standards of belief he has endeavoured to estimate impartially. The book is intended for serious inquirers into the truth of Christianity who have a fair general education but little knowledge of Theology.

CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

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CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

NOTES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S PERSON

BY

EDWARD GRUBB, M.A.

Author of "Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus,"
"Authority and the Light Within,"
"The Religion of Experience," etc.

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NOTE

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PREFACE

THE following chapters, like those contained in the author's former volume, *Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus* appeared originally as monthly instalments of "Study Notes" in the pages of *The British Friend*, of which he was Editor. The demand for the former volume gives ground for hoping that a good many thoughtful enquirers may welcome this further study of the beliefs in regard to the Person of Christ which were arrived at by early and later Christians. The issue of the book has been delayed for some years, owing to war conditions. In the author's view, the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, and the further doctrine of the Trinity which it was found to involve, are not truths supernaturally communicated to men, concerning matters that transcend human experience; but are in the true sense of the term *theories*: that is, ideas reached in the legitimate endeavour to explain and rationalise facts of actual experience, outward and inward. These doctrines were the work of human reason, more or less enlightened by the Spirit of God, reflecting on the facts of what Jesus was and what He had done for the inner lives of men. They were, therefore, in the first instance, the expression not of abstract but of concrete truth. But, when Christianity spread among the Gentiles, the Greek intellect, which loved abstractions, largely lost the basis of vivid experience in which the process had begun; and this is why to us the Christian speculation of the creed-building ages seems so often an arid waste. The greatest service which the modern Critical method has rendered to theology is that it has helped to restore the outlines of the concrete Personality of Jesus, and with it the wonder and the awe which led His followers to question who and what He was. And any Christology that is to satisfy the modern mind will necessarily have to make terms with Science, both physical and historical.

Such are the dominant thoughts that have guided these studies. The author makes no claim to be a theologian; but possibly mistakes in the technical field may be overlooked by clerical critics, if he has been able in any measure to bring to these deep questions

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something of the freshness and simplicity which the lay mind craves.

It is hoped that the volume may be of use, not only for private study, but also as a Text-book for Reading and Study Groups. For this purpose it is essential that Part I. should be read in the closest connection with the New Testament itself; and it is extremely desirable that the brief Notes contained in Part II., which provide hardly more than a skeleton, should be filled out by further study of some of the books to which references are given.

The author is indebted for valuable criticism and suggestion, especially in Part II., to Rev. R. S. Franks, of Bristol, whose important book on "The Work of Christ" he has unfortunately been unable to study.

EDWARD GRUBB.

Croydon, Sept., 1919.

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PART I

The Person of Christ in the
New Testament

CHAPTER I

THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The Foundations.—Three facts must always be borne in mind in studying what any of the New Testament writers thought and said about the Person of Jesus Christ :

(a) They always started from the certainty that Jesus was really and truly *a man* ; that He was a child, grew up, lived, suffered, and died like other men ; that He had a *personal character*, which they represent as one of perfect moral beauty and force.

(b) They were absolutely assured that He *lived again* after death, and that some of them had seen and spoken with Him.

(c) They knew that He had raised them into a new knowledge of God as their Father, and into a new moral life based on that knowledge.

Hence their thought about Him is always based on *facts*, partly of the outer life and partly of the inner. They do not write like philosophers, who try to arrive at truth by processes of abstract thinking. Nor do they simply register formulæ supernaturally revealed. When they begin to formulate “doctrines,” they are trying to explain, both to themselves and others, the facts of their experience.

Historical Truthfulness.—The first three Gospels are called “Synoptic” (from two Greek words meaning *see* and *together*) because they present a *common view* of the life and teaching of Jesus. They were written, probably, between 60 and 80 A.D., though it is possible the first and third Gospels date from between 90 and 100 A.D. This was a time when (as we shall see) the followers of Jesus had already begun to hold a lofty “Christology”—that is to say, a high doctrine of His Person. But it hardly appears, except indirectly, in these narratives. The writers do not represent Jesus as speaking about Himself in the language

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which they and their friends had begun to use about Him.* They write as men who are endeavouring to give the facts of His life and teaching and death, as they have gathered them from the best available sources of information. This they do with little comment of their own, leaving the facts to make their own impression.

The narratives (especially the earliest, the Gospel according to Mark) give us what purports to be a plain unvarnished story of a truly human and beautiful life, in which, however, hints and glimpses of something greater and more wonderful break through here and there. This affords one of the strongest indications of the historical truthfulness of the writers. For the only alternative is that they were accomplished literary artists, which their work as a whole (especially that of Mark) shows they were not.

The Virgin Birth.—The first and third Gospels give us accounts (differing widely in detail) of the circumstances attending the supernatural conception of Jesus. With these the present writer has dealt elsewhere,† and it is needless to go over the ground again. It should be noted that neither Matthew nor Luke builds anything upon the Virgin Birth, and no other New Testament writer makes any allusion whatever to it. There is no evidence that it influenced their Christology in the smallest degree, and we shall not therefore make any use of it.

The Sinlessness of Jesus.—Nowhere in the Synoptic narratives does Jesus explicitly claim to be sinless, and He

* An exception must be made in the case of such a passage as Matt. xxviii. 19, where the form of words "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost" probably presents the baptismal formula that had become customary in the Church rather than the actual words of Jesus. (See Stanton, *The Gospels of Historical Documents*, Vol. II., p. 356). Again, in Mark ix. 41, the words "because ye are *Christ's*" are not such as Jesus would have actually used. But the rarity of such passages is impressive. Note especially the absence from the Synoptic Gospels of any allusion to "pre-existence." See *Jesus or Christ?* (Supplement to the "Hibbert Journal," 1909), Essay by Canon Scott Holland on "The Jesus of History and the Christ of Religion."

† *Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 31-33. It may be added that Mark clearly implies (though he does not expressly state) that the mother of Jesus, along with His "brethren," tried to stop Him in His work (compare Mark iii. 21, 31, vi. 4).

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disclaims "goodness" in the absolute sense, as belonging to God alone (Mark x. 18). But there is no trace of His feeling the need for repentance or forgiveness, or regret for anything He has said or done. He speaks always with a note of authority (Mark i. 22), which seems to point to an inner life of unclouded communion with God, bringing with it perfect clearness of spiritual vision (see esp. Matt. xi. 25-30). In the case of other men, absence of the penitential note is almost always an indication of spiritual pride; but the portrait of Jesus is that of One who is so perfect in moral character as to be perfect also in humility.* (This is another evidence of the truthfulness of the narratives; for the invention of such a character seems to be quite beyond human powers.) It is clear that Jesus left upon His followers the impression of a stainless, radiant soul, perfectly human and dependent upon His Father, yet shining always in God's sunlight (1 Pet. ii. 22; Heb. iv. 15; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 John iii. 5); and, if so, this must have been a powerful factor influencing their thoughts concerning who and what He was. It was one of the facts they had to try to account for.

Limitations of power and knowledge.—All the Synoptists, of course, represent Jesus as a man possessed of more than ordinary power and insight. His "mighty works" were largely works of healing persons diseased in body or mind; but we can draw no sharp line between these and other "miracles" such as the stilling of the storm (Mark iv. 35-41) and the feeding of the five thousand (Mark vi. 30-44).

The instances of His power of reading the thoughts of others are mostly in the Fourth Gospel (John i. 48, ii. 25, iv. 18, vi. 64); but in the Synoptics He foresees His death

* Striking evidences of humility are in His voluntary choice of the difficult and dangerous rôle of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, as His ideal of Messiahship, instead of that of the glorified King of popular expectation; in His acceptance of baptism at the hands of John the Baptist (Mark i. 9, Matt. iii. 13-15); in His refusal to work a "sign from heaven" (Mark viii. 11, 12); in His eating with "publicans and sinners" (Luke xv. 1, 2); in His prayer for the forgiveness of His executioners (Luke xxiii. 34). His driving out of the money-changers (Mark xi. 15-17), and His denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mark xii. 38-40) show no signs of personal resentment, but rather of loyalty to God, to truth and to mercy.

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and resurrection (Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 33, 34), and He is aware of the treachery of Judas (Mark xiv. 18).

But (especially in Mark) there are obvious limitations to both His power and His knowledge. His power is limited by the "faith" of others. At Nazareth He "could" do hardly any mighty work (Mark vi. 5). He has difficulty in curing a blind man at Bethsaida (Mark viii. 22-26). He does not know the day or hour of His "coming in power and glory" (Mark xiii. 32). He asks questions for information, like anyone else (Mark vi. 38, ix. 21). He "marvels" at the unbelief of His townsmen (Mark vi. 6), and at the dulness of His disciples (Mark viii. 14-21, ix. 19). He "advances" in wisdom, as well as stature—expands in mind and knowledge just as He does in body (Luke ii. 52). He rejoices, like any other good teacher, at evidences that His disciples are growing in insight and power (Matt. xvi. 17; Luke x. 17-21).

Further, the Synoptists represent Jesus as frequently in the grip of very real *temptation* (Mark i. 13, viii. 33, xiv. 36; Luke iv. 13, xxii. 28). Now it is fatal, though it is far too common, to make light of this in the desire to magnify His Divine nature. If we take His temptation seriously it certainly carries with it the limitation of His knowledge. For, if He could always foresee victory, there would be no real temptation at all.

We reach the same conclusion if we ponder His use of prayer, and His sense of absolute dependence on the Father (see later, p. 19, and compare John v. 19), which He could not possibly have felt if He had been conscious of almighty power and knowledge. In short the Jesus of the Synoptists is from first to last *a real man*, subject to the ordinary limitations of humanity, and yet transcending them more and more as He "advances." Genuine belief in the Incarnation carries with it the conviction that He did actually become subject to our limitations. An omniscient baby would not be a human child at all.

The spiritual Ruler and Judge of men.—While the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels is thus our "brother man," identified with us in all respects except our sinfulness, He is yet much more. John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets, but He is greater (Matt. xi. 11-15). He is

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greater than Jonah or Solomon (Matt. xii. 41, 42). The precepts of the sacred law He transcends by His own *ipse dixit* (Matt. v. 21, 22, etc.). He claims nothing short of absolute loyalty from those who would enter the Kingdom (Luke ix. 57-62). For Him they are to renounce everything, and be willing to follow Him even to the gallows (Luke xiv. 25-27, 33). Even in the Sermon on the Mount He is the Judge of men, and they will be judged not by their professions but simply by the loyalty shown in their obedience to Him (Matt. vii. 21-27). In the dramatic picture of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt. xxv. 31-46) He is again the Judge, and the principle on which His judgment proceeds is relation to Himself in the person of His "brethren," with whom He identifies Himself. In Mark xiii. 32, where He disclaims knowledge of the "day and hour," He places Himself, "the Son," between "the angels" and "the Father."

Thus we find the amazing fact that personal lowliness, right through, goes hand in hand with these tremendous assumptions of superhuman dignity. His own greatness, and therefore that of His followers, is greatness of service and sacrifice for others (Mark x. 42-45, Luke xxii. 27). Dr. E. A. Abbott, in his book *The Son of Man*, states his belief that, when Jesus said (Matt. xi. 11), "He that is but little [lit. *the lesser one*] in the Kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist," He was referring to *Himself*, for He felt Himself to be, in the completest sense, God's "little one" or "babe." It is because He is perfectly a "babe" that the Fatherhood of God is revealed to Him (Matt. xi. 25). The word "Abba" (Father) used by Him in prayer is the word of a child. This lends a peculiar tenderness to His words about children or "little ones," with whom He identifies Himself (Mark ix. 36, 37, 42; x. 13-16; Matt. xviii. 1-4). Dr. Abbott further suggests that the "little ones" of the Synoptics become the "lambs" of the fourth Gospel, where Jesus is not only their Shepherd but is Himself the "Lamb" of God.

In the next chapter we shall study what the Synoptists suggest to us of the relation to God which lay behind this unique relation of Jesus to men.

CHAPTER II

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

(continued)

“ The great value of the Synoptists is that they record for us the actual history of faith in Jesus Christ. They describe His personality, and the impression actually produced by it on the men who were His constant companions.”* That appears to the present writer a true summary of what the Synoptic Gospels give us: not Jesus as He actually was in Himself—no record could do that—but Jesus as He appeared to the first generation of His followers. Hints abound, especially in Mark, of their astonishment at the things He said and did, of their “ slowness of heart ” in understanding Him, and of the very gradual development of their faith (Mark i. 22, 27 ; ii. 12 ; iv. 41 ; v. 42 ; vi. 52 ; vii. 18, 37 ; viii. 17-21 ; ix. 19, 32, etc.).

Remembering that (as was pointed out in chap. I.) these records date from a time when the greater part of the Church had begun to think of Jesus as a Divine person, we find in such naïve disclosures of slowness of faith a striking evidence of truthfulness. They are surely not the kind of thing that people who were making up incidents to illustrate a Divine life would, unless they were clever literary artists, think of introducing—especially as the want of faith throws a certain discredit on those who had become the venerated leaders of the Church. But they are just the kind of thing that those leaders themselves would say, looking back on the days of their blindness. “ What fools we all were then ! ”

It seems needful to dwell on this, because the idea is being advanced by a few scholars, whose names carry

* Ottley, *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 65.

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weight, that the Jesus of the Gospels is largely a " mythical " figure, like the Arthur of the medieval romances.*

The Messiah.—The Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels is obviously One who feels that in some sense He fulfils the prophecies of a Messiah or Christ (that is, one " Anointed " by God to be a Deliverer), of which the minds of His contemporaries were full. But Mark makes it very clear—much more clear than Matthew or Luke—that He does not begin His work by announcing Himself as such. He goes about preaching the " Kingdom " and healing diseases ; and it is only after opposition has been encountered and He has taken away His chosen disciples into seclusion, that He asks them whether they have found out who He is (Mark viii. 27-30). Peter's great answer, " Thou art the Christ," fills Him with rejoicing, for here is one at any rate who has learnt the lesson for himself, not from man but from God (Matt. xvi. 17). But he strictly charges them not to make it known.

Why this reserve ? Because His thoughts about the Messiah and His work were utterly different from those of the people about Him. He was *not* the sort of Messiah they were looking for—a national leader who should deliver them from the Roman yoke and rule over them in a political Kingdom—and His greatest anxiety was that he should not be taken as such (John vi. 15).† His thoughts of what the Messiah was to be and do were formed on quite another model—that of the " Servant of

* That is all we have room to say in answer to the ultra-radical arguments of writers like Mr. J. M. Robertson and Prof. Drews, that the Jesus of the Gospels is a purely ideal figure, with no real person behind it whose lineaments we can now recover. The same facts go far, we believe, to prove the untenableness of another view that is held by some extreme critics, that the real Jesus of history was merely an apocalyptic dreamer who expected shortly to set up his " Kingdom " among men by an earth-shaking catastrophe, and that the ethical and spiritual features of the Gospel teaching are due rather to his followers than to himself, or at the best represent only an " interim ethic."

† The people thought of their Messiah as the " son of David," but this title Jesus never used of Himself. Many modern students believe that He intended to show its inadequacy when He asked the question, " How say the scribes that the Christ is the Son of David ? " (Mark xii. 35-37).

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Jehovah " in Is. xlii.-liii.,* of One who was to suffer shame and rejection and death at the hands of His people—a figure that no one before Jesus, it seems safe to say, had identified with the Messiah at all. (Note the puzzled question of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts viii. 34). The Messiah would indeed be exalted; but only through humiliation, suffering, and death (Is. lii. 13—liii. 12).

According to Mark's account, Jesus never openly proclaimed Himself as the Messiah until His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mark xi. 1-10). The driving of the money-changers from the temple (Mark xi. 15-18) is also best understood as a Messianic claim; and His words to the High Priest (Mark xiv. 61, 62) certainly were such. Thus it seems that Jesus did not declare Himself publicly as the Messiah till close to the end of His ministry.

The Son of Man.—He did, however, hint at what He believed Himself to be, by employing this title, which He constantly used of Himself but which hardly anyone at the time understood. "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark ii. 10), and "is lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 28). Whatever may have been the source from which He derived it,† it seems certain that He employed it as the most fitting term He could find to suggest that idea of *exaltation through lowliness* which lay deep in His thought of the Messiah. In the Book of Enoch, which He may have read, the Messianic "Son of Man" is always a glorified, superhuman figure, and there is no hint of rejection or suffering. On the other hand, in the Old Testament (as in Ps. viii. 4 and the Book of Ezekiel) the term "son of man" expresses man's weakness and littleness in the presence of God. The phrase, as Jesus uses it, may be taken to imply that in His thoughts the Messiah would be, essentially, *a man in his true relation to God*—a relation only fully manifested in His own case, and by Him only as He sought not His own glory, but identified Himself with the humblest and weakest of his brethren, following the path of service marked out for Him by the Father, though that led Him through suffering, humiliation and death. "As used by

* See Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus, pp. 39, 40.

† See Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus, pp. 125, 126.

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our Lord, then, the name ' Son of Man ' is intrinsically a paradox. It binds Jesus to humanity, yet singles Him out from other men."*

The Son of God.—This term, unlike the other, was undoubtedly a recognised name for the Messiah, and it is usually employed, not by Jesus of Himself, but by others about Him—by the voice from Heaven, by the tempter, by demoniacs, by Peter, by the High Priest at the trial, by the centurion at the cross (Mark i. 11, ix. 7 ; Matt. iv. 3 ; Mark iii. 11 ; Matt. xvi. 15 ; Mark xiv. 61, xv. 39).†

But, though Jesus rarely employed it about Himself, its popular implications being those which He wished to avoid, it did express that which lay deepest in His consciousness—the sense of a perfect filial relation to God. And, at times, this deep-lying consciousness finds expression. It seems to have developed in His mind long before His baptism—we find it present when He was only a boy of twelve (Luke ii. 49). He speaks often of God as " my Father," indicating a special sense of close relationship. In the parable of the husbandmen (Mark xii. 6) the " beloved son " of the lord of the vineyard is distinguished from the " servants." In Mark xiii. 32, as we have noticed, Jesus speaks of Himself as " the Son " simply, placing Himself between " the angels " and " the Father."

The most remarkable passage in which the " filial consciousness " of Jesus finds expression is Luke x. 21, 22, with its parallel in Matt. xi. 25-27, followed by the words of invitation, " Come unto me." Jesus rejoices that, whereas the truth of God's fatherhood and providential care is hidden from the wise and understanding, it is " revealed to babes "—of whom He Himself, in lowliness and perfect trust, is first and chief. " All things have been delivered to me of my Father"—the words express not alone the greatness of His endowment but His sense of absolute dependence on God. " What I have is not mine, but His alone " (Compare John v. 19). These things are given

* H. R. Mackintosh, article " Person of Christ," in Hastings' one volume Bible Dictionary.

† The term " Son of God " as a name for the Messiah was probably derived from Old Testament passages like Ps. ii. 7, lxxxix. 26, 27. It did *not* carry with it, for most minds at any rate, the idea of " full divinity."

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Him because His will is so close to the will of God that no shadow of misunderstanding has ever come between them. "No one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father, and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." Just as two souls, knit together by a life-time of love and experience, understand one another, so the Father knows Him and He knows the Father. And it is just because of this close intimacy—because He is perfectly the "babe," the "son"—that He is able to reveal the Father to others, and to give rest to all who will "come" and share His yoke of willing obedience.

We misunderstand this wonderful passage of self-disclosure—by far the most remarkable in the Synoptic Gospels—if we take it as intended to let us into any secret theory of the Divine nature. The relations between "Son" and "Father" here suggested are not theological but *experimental*; they express what Jesus knew of the relations between Himself and God not in theory but in experience. His knowledge of the Father is knowledge of His *character*, won by the insight and communion of loving hearts and united wills.

But the filial consciousness of Jesus is disclosed to us here as something unique in human experience. That is to say, no other son of man has ever felt God to be to him what the Father was to Jesus. And the reason clearly is that no one else has maintained unbroken communion; no one else has remained perfectly lowly and dependent; in all other cases the vision of God has been clouded by some degree of sin, of self-will, causing a breach of filial relations.

At the same time, this uniqueness of the Sonship of Jesus does not mean that other men may not, in some measure, share it. He *was* the "Son of God"; we are called to *become* "sons of God" (Matt. v. 45, in the Greek). If it were not so, we could not in the least understand it; the sonship of Jesus has meaning for us just in so far as we begin to know what it is to be sons ourselves. Moreover, this filial consciousness of Jesus, if we rightly apprehend it, certainly implies the limitation of His powers. If He had felt Himself to be endowed with all power and all

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knowledge, He could not possibly have felt absolute dependence on God as He said He did.

The Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels, then, is one who, while fully and completely man, feeling Himself compassed about by the limitations of real humanity, lives ever in a perfect relation of sonship to God ; and who, by virtue of this unbroken intimacy, has the power to reveal Him to all who will come into a true relation to Himself, and into the same place of lowly dependence and obedience in which He lives. This is the secret of the deep union of lowliness with exaltation whereby He who is the perfect “ babe ” is also the spiritual Ruler and Judge of men.

CHAPTER III

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The historical trustworthiness of the Acts of the Apostles has been much discussed, chiefly on account of the difficulty of reconciling some of its statements with those contained in the earlier epistles of Paul, especially that to the Galatians. The tendency of later criticism, especially since the appearance of Harnack's *Luke the Physician*, has been to rehabilitate the Acts as, on the whole, a trustworthy source of information. Towards this the works of Sir W. M. Ramsay have greatly contributed.

The special point that concerns us here is the testimony to Jesus Christ borne by the first Apostles, according to this book. These are chiefly found in the discourses attributed to Peter in the earlier chapters, and to Paul in the later ones. Some of the later discourses, the historian (who is now generally admitted to have been Luke) may have heard himself; the earlier ones he is very unlikely to have heard. Did he then freely "make them up"? We have no means of judging how far he exercised his own imagination, except the fact that, with scarcely an exception, what he records as having been uttered is thoroughly appropriate. He nowhere attributes to Peter or the others the lofty ideas concerning Jesus Christ which Paul had already (when Luke wrote) begun to set forth in his Letters to the Churches, and which afterwards came to be accepted as the basis of Christian doctrine. *The Christology of the early chapters of the Acts is of a very simple and primitive character*; and this means that either the first Apostles really did say, substantially, the things about Jesus which Luke makes them say; or else that he thought of them as holding these simple ideas. In either case it shows, almost certainly, that the first proclamation of faith in Christ was of a primitive and undeveloped character.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Taking the narrative as it stands, we see three leading ideas about Jesus in this early preaching :

- (i.) That though apparently defeated and really crucified by His enemies, He yet fulfilled in Himself the Jewish prophecies of a Messiah.
- (ii.) That the proof of this was the fact that He had risen from the dead.
- (iii.) That through Him all who would repent might receive forgiveness of sins, and live a new life with God, which is salvation.

In other words, as Dr. Forrest says,* “ the faith [of the first Apostles] grew out of just such teaching as is contained in the Synoptic Gospels.” And the fact that such simple teaching was able to bring those who received it, by thousands, into the reality of Christian experience is profoundly significant. It is no disparagement of the more developed thoughts of Paul and John to say that these early chapters of the Acts prove that such thoughts and beliefs are not necessary for *beginning* the Christian life.

These speakers, like the Synoptic writers, always start with the assumption of the real humanity of Jesus. He is “ *a man* approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you ” (Acts ii. 22). He is a man whom “ God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, for God was with him ” (x. 38). Peter here appeals to the well-known facts of His life, and goes on to speak of His crucifixion ; and he leads up to the central declaration that, in spite of an ignominious death and seeming failure, “ God hath made him both Lord† and Messiah, this Jesus whom ye crucified ” (ii. 36). This is the substance of the early preaching of Christianity, that *Jesus is the Messiah* (v. 42 ; viii. 5 ; ix. 22 ; xvii. 3b ; xviii. 5b, 28) ; that He has fulfilled in Himself the prophecies on which the hope of Israel is founded (iii. 20-26).

* *The Christ of History and of Experience*, p. 86.

† “ Lord ” here means “ Master,” as in Matt. vii. 21, “ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord.” It is not the equivalent of “ LORD ” in the Old Testament, which, when printed in capitals, is a translation of the proper name Jehovah. Though that name was translated into Greek by the same word, *κύριος*, it is not here an assertion of the “ full deity ” of Jesus.

Very soon, the name and the title, "Jesus the Messiah," grew together into a fuller name, "Jesus Christ" (iv. 10 ; viii. 12 ; ix. 34), sometimes with the addition or prefix "the Lord" (xi. 17).

Now, if we ask how the Apostles reached the conviction that, in spite of seeming failure and actual crucifixion, Jesus was yet the Messiah, there are two answers : (a) They found, as He had done, a prophecy that the Messiah would suffer rejection and death, in "Isaiah's" pictures of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (Is. xlii.—liii). (b) They were assured that Jesus had risen from the dead.

(a) It seems certain that no one before Jesus himself had ever taken the pictures of the Suffering Servant as a prophecy of the Messiah, and their primary reference was certainly to suffering Israel (see esp. Is. xlix. 3). But He, as we have seen,* seems largely to have modelled His conception of the Messiah's earthly work on that figure. There are, indeed, few instances in the Synoptics in which He explicitly applies to Himself any of the "Servant" passages† ; but Luke, very significantly, represents Him after His resurrection as instructing the two disciples on their way to Emmaus with the words, "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things?" (Luke xxiv. 26). It is difficult to believe that the disciples could, even with the fact of the resurrection before them, have made the great and original discovery of a Messianic meaning in the pictures of the "Servant," if they had not had some help from Him beforehand—though very probably they failed to understand, and therefore to remember and record, most of His words about it.

That they did discover a forecast of Jesus in these "Servant" passages is perfectly clear. In the early chapters of the Acts, Jesus is repeatedly spoken of as God's "Servant," though the word is obscured in the Authorised Version by the unfortunate translation "Son" or "Child" (iii. 13, 26 ; iv. 27, 30). When the puzzled Ethiopian

* See above, p. 18.

† One is to be found in Luke xxii. 37 ; and in Mark x. 45, xiv. 24, the word "many" is almost certainly an echo of Is. liii. 12. Is. lxi. 1-3, quoted in part in Luke iv. 16-19 and in Matthew xi. 5, is not a part of the "Servant" prophecy, but it proved to Jesus equally suggestive of the nature of His work.

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eunuch, reading "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," asks, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" Philip at once applies it to Jesus (viii. 26-35). It is in accordance with this identification that the first Evangelist finds a fulfilment by Jesus of these prophecies (Matt. viii. 17, xii. 17-21). Peter even goes so far as to say that "God foreshowed by the mouth of *all* the Prophets that His Messiah should suffer" (Acts iii. 18).*

(b) The second influence which convinced the Apostles of the Messiahship of Jesus was their assurance that He had been raised from the dead. This is the central fact on which their preaching is based (ii. 24-32; iv. 2, 33; v. 30; x. 40, &c.); and it seems perfectly safe to say that nothing but absolute belief in it could have restored their faith in Him after it had been done to death upon the Cross. It is in virtue of this, and of the joyful experience that had come to them at Pentecost, which they attribute to His living Spirit, that they are assured that God has exalted Him (ii. 33); that He is the "Prince of Life" (iii. 15; v. 31), able still to restore health to the body (iii. 6, 16; ix. 34) and give salvation to the soul (iv. 12); that He is "ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (x. 42).

The salvation which the Apostles proclaim in the name of Jesus is not only the forgiveness of sins (ii. 38; iii. 19; x. 43); it is the "turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (iii. 26); it is also the gift of the Holy Spirit (ii. 38b; v. 32; x. 44-48). That is to say, it is a new consciousness of reconciliation to God, through repentance and the acceptance of Christ, bringing with it cleansing from sin, and an experience of power and joy and freedom. It is an inward and ethical work wrought in the soul, and no mere deliverance from the fear of future punishment.

Turning now to the story of Paul, which fills the Acts in ch. ix. 1-30, and from xiii. 1 to the end, we see the same kind of primitive and undeveloped Christology attributed to him in his preaching of the Gospel. It was, of course, his experience on the way to Damascus that made him a

* The only passage then commonly recognised as Messianic which hints at the Messiah suffering is Zech. xii. 10, and it is very obscure. Psalm xxii., like the "Servant" passages, certainly referred in the first instance to Israel.

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Christian, by convincing him that Jesus was still alive and therefore was the Messiah. Luke represents him (ix. 20) as beginning at once, after he is cured of his blindness, to proclaim Jesus in the Synagogues, "that He is the Son of God" (*i.e.* the Messiah). Paul also, like the others, finds in the Suffering Servant a prophecy of Christ; it is in virtue of this that at Thessalonica he "opens" what to his hearers was a wholly new idea, that "it behoved the Messiah to suffer" (xvii. 3, compare xxvi. 23), and that accordingly Jesus, though He has suffered death, is yet the Messiah (xviii. 5, 28).

In his discourse in the Synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (xiii. 16-41) Paul appeals to the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and tells the story of His accusation before Pilate, of His crucifixion and burial, ending with the assertion of His resurrection, which is what he always leads up to (compare xvii. 31). This is what convinces Paul that He is "the Righteous One" (xxii. 14), "a Saviour" (xiii. 23), through whom "is proclaimed unto you remission of sins," and by whom "everyone that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (xiii. 38, 39). He is also "the man ordained by God to "judge the world in righteousness" (xvii. 31). It is His own living Spirit who is the Guide of Paul and others in their work of love (xvi. 7), and He appears to Paul at various crises in his life with a message of cheer or warning (xviii. 9; xxii. 17, 18; xxiii. 11). "Faith" in Him is coupled with repentance towards God as comprising the substance of Paul's preaching (xx. 21), and it is this faith which is offered to the terrified jailer at Philippi as the means of "salvation" (xvi. 31)—salvation, probably, in a very much higher sense than the jailer had ever thought of.

The above are practically all the allusions which throw light on Paul's thoughts of Jesus Christ as they appear in the Acts of the Apostles. It will be seen that they scarcely go beyond the ideas that are attributed to Peter. It is of course probable that Luke only gives us for the most part the heads of Paul's discourses, and that he developed many thoughts which are here sketched in outline only; but the only instance in which, so far as he is reported

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he goes much beyond Peter is in his use at Pisidian Antioch of the characteristically Pauline term "justification" (xiii. 39). Nowhere is there an ascription of "full deity" to Jesus, nor any suggestion of His pre-existence as the eternal Word. These evidences of growth and development in the ideas and beliefs of the followers of Christ are, surely, in accordance with truth and human nature. Revelation grows, like all things that are alive. The disciples of Jesus began with experience, and they went on to theory. This appears to be the Divine and truly natural order, and the discovery of such an order of development in the New Testament greatly strengthens our belief in it.

Yet we must not close our eyes to the fact that these apostles, many of whom had been actual companions of Jesus, did very quickly begin to use about Him words that they would never have thought of applying to any other human being. Brought up as they were in an atmosphere of almost fanatical monotheism, which made the ascription of Divine honours to a human being appear to them blasphemy, they yet exalted their Companion and Friend into an object of faith and worship, and trusted His unseen Presence as we can only trust the Presence of God.

"We can scarcely over-estimate," says Prof. H. R. Mackintosh,* "the significance for Jews of this ascription of universal Lordship to One with whom they had eaten and drunk, and of whose death they had been witnesses." And, let us keep constantly in our minds, they did this not because they were fond of indulging in speculative fancies and mythical dreams, but *because of what Jesus had done for their inner lives*. At the root of everything lay their experience of the new life with God into which He had brought them.

* Hastings' One Volume Dictionary of the Bible, p. 705.

CHAPTER IV

SOME EARLY EPISTLES

We deal in this chapter with four Epistles which have been usually supposed to be among the earliest in the New Testament—those of James and 1 Peter, and Paul's two short letters to the Thessalonians.*

The Epistle of James.—Tradition ascribes this letter to "James the Lord's brother," who, though not one of the twelve, became head of the Jerusalem Church. He is the "James" alluded to by Paul in Gal. i. 19, ii. 9-12, and 1 Cor. xv. 7; and that he was in a position of great authority is clear from Acts xii. 17b, and xv. 13-21. The Council of "apostles and elders" in Acts xv. was held about A.D. 50 or 52, and it is the opinion of many English scholars that the Epistle was written before that date. There are some interesting parallels between expressions used in the Epistle and in the speech reported to have been made by James at the Council, which (so far) confirm the traditional authorship: (*e.g.*, "hearken," James ii. 5, Acts xv. 13; "the name which was called upon you," ii. 7, Acts xv. 17; "keep himself," i. 27, Acts xv. 29b).†

Whatever the date may be, it is clear that the Christology of the Epistle is of a very primitive type. In i. 1 the writer calls himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," and in ii. 1 Christ is spoken of as "our Lord Jesus Christ of glory" (*cf.* 1 Cor. ii. 8). Those are

* 2 Peter is omitted here, being probably the latest book in the New Testament, dating from the first half of the second century. It was not received into the Canon till the end of the fourth century, and doubts as to its genuineness have existed from the first. It was not accepted by Erasmus or Calvin.

† The chief objections to the early date are (*a*) the absence of much external evidence; (*b*) the apparent allusion to Paul's teaching on justification (ii. 14-26); and (*c*) the fact that both the theology of the letter and the moral conditions which it presupposes are similar to what we find in Hermas and other writers of his school of thought early in the second century. (See Peake, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 84-89.) These and other arguments are regarded by Moffatt (*Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*) as conclusive against the early date (pp. 468-475).

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the only allusions the writer makes by name to Jesus. There is no mention of His birth, of His death for our sins, or of His resurrection. It is clear that the writer's aim is severely practical; that he is exhorting his readers to righteousness of life, conceived after a Jewish and rather legalistic fashion. But it is also evident that he has come to regard Jesus as "Lord" and as "glorified." Along with the other primitive disciples, he expects His speedy return (v. 7-9). He uses the term "the Lord" sometimes for Christ (v. 7-9 and probably 14, 15), and sometimes for God (v. 10, 11); apparently he did not feel it needful to distinguish.

It has been suggested that the writer's Judaic tone, and his frequent echoes of the Hebrew prophets (esp. in ch. iv., v.) would be explained if he were writing not for Christians but for Jews (see i. 1), and shewing them how the religion of Jesus fulfilled their highest ideals. In any case the background of the writer's thought is Christian; he recognises a *new birth* "by the word of truth" (i. 18), which "word" also works salvation (i. 21); and he frequently uses almost the words of the Sermon on the Mount (esp. i. 22; ii. 5, 8; v. 12).* Thus the Epistle bears indirect witness to the human life and teaching of Jesus. If Christianity is for James mainly a higher kind of law, it is yet "*a law of liberty*" (i. 25, ii. 12); and this expression is enough to show that his thoughts are not so fundamentally opposed to those of Paul as Luther imagined when he called this letter "a right strawy epistle."

Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians.—These two short letters are believed to be among the earliest writings in the New Testament, having been addressed to the Thessalonian Church from Corinth (Acts xviii.), probably in A.D. 52.† There is very little of a doctrinal nature in either of them.

* It has been conjectured by Mr. G. Currie Martin and Prof. J. H. Moulton that the Epistle is really a collection of homilies based on sayings of Jesus, recorded and unrecorded (see Peake, as above, p. 89).

† The Pauline authorship of the second epistle is less certain than that of the first. Prof. Ramsay has shown, by a recently discovered inscription fixing the date when Gallio was pro-consul of Achaia, that Paul resided in Corinth from the autumn of 51 to the early spring of 53 A.D. (*Pictures of the Apostolic Church*, p. 207).

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The only allusion to the human life of Jesus is in 1 Thess. ii. 15, where Paul says that the Jews "killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets"; but this is quite enough to show, in opposition to some modern views, that he did regard Him as a real man. Apart from moral teaching, which abounds in both letters, Paul's chief interest is in the resurrection of Jesus (the words "whom He raised from the dead" in 1 Thess. i. 10 are probably our earliest written testimony to the resurrection), and in His return in glory, which, as in 1 Peter, is called His "revelation" (2 Thess. i. 7). Paul's confident expectation that this would occur in his own lifetime and that of his readers (1 Thess. iv. 13-18) seems to have induced some of them to abandon work and lapse into disorderly ways; and the second letter probably followed quickly after the first to explain that he did not mean "the day of the Lord is now present" (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2), that he had told them when he was at Thessalonica that there would be a great manifestation of wickedness first (ii. 3-12, a familiar apocalyptic conception), and that they must go on quietly with their daily work (iii. 6-15). The only other expressions that throw light on Paul's thoughts of Christ are allusions to His death, which brings salvation by deliverance from the "wrath to come" (1 Thess. i. 10b, v. 9); and his coupling the "Lord Jesus" with "God the Father" as his inward guide (1 Thess. iii. 11). It is clear from this that Paul thinks of Jesus in glory, not as far away, but as a living accessible Friend and Helper. The "wrath" from which he assures his readers that Christ delivers them is the vengeance which at His coming He is about to execute on the wicked (2 Thess. i. 8, 9). Nothing is said of the means by which salvation is to be won, except that it is to be by "obedience to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus"; but the salvation itself, alike for those who have died and those who remain till the coming of the Lord, will be "life together with Him" (1 Thess. v. 10).

The First Epistle of Peter.—The early date of this Epistle, unlike that of James, is widely attested by external evidence. It is quoted as Peter's by many second century authorities, and no doubt as to its genuineness appears to have been felt in the early Church. The chief difficulty of ascribing

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it to Peter is its strongly Pauline tone and manner.* This may be explained if the actual writing was done by Silvanus, who is stated (v. 12) to have acted as Peter's amanuensis. Peter, perhaps, gave him some thoughts and left him to work out the letter in his own way. Silvanus, as a frequent companion of Paul, may have used his letters as a model. On the whole, there seems to be sufficient evidence to justify us in quoting the letter as Peter's.† As Peter is reported to have been martyred at Rome about A.D. 64, we may probably date the epistle shortly before that time.‡

This letter, like that of James, is addressed to those of "The Dispersion"; but quite clearly they are not Jews but Christians, most of whom probably never were Jews (ii. 10). Several other expressions used by the writer have their parallels in James: notably "the proof of your faith" (1 Peter i. 7, James i. 3; also compare 1 Peter i. 3, 23, with James i. 18, and 1 Peter v. 5, 6, with James iv. 6, 10). But there is nothing here of James's rather narrow Judaic and legal outlook. Christianity is not presented as a law, but as a salvation, in which the writer and his friends "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (i. 8). There are few passages in the New Testament richer in the abounding joy and triumph of Christian faith than is the first chapter.

The writer makes little use of the teaching of Jesus; but ii. 12 recalls Matt. v. 16, and iii. 14 is almost quoted from Matt. v. 10. His chief appeal is to the patience and willing obedience with which Jesus bore His sufferings, as an example for those who are enduring a "fiery trial" (see esp. ii. 21-23; iii. 17, 18; iv. 1, 12-16), probably in the Neronian persecution. The aim of the letter being thus entirely practical and non-theological, we need not

* Compare, with Eph. v. 22—vi. 10, the sections in 1 Peter ii. and iii. beginning with "servants" wives," "husbands," and followed by "Finally."

† See Peake, as above, pp. 90-95. Moffatt, in his *Introduction* (quoted above), favours the Petrine authorship. He says: "Instead of 1 Peter representing a diluted and faded Paulinism, it denotes an attitude influenced, but essentially uncontrolled, by the special ideas of Paul's theology" (p. 331).

‡ "Babylon" in v. 13 will in this case be a mystical name for Rome.

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wonder that the writer does not develop his thoughts of the Person of Christ. But he does insist again and again on the redeeming efficacy of His death (i. 11, 18, 19 ; ii. 24 ; iii. 18, etc.), using for the Cross the same word "tree" or "log" that Peter is reported as using in Acts v. 30. The "redemption" which is wrought by the death or "blood" of Christ is no mere deliverance from wrath or punishment (which is never once alluded to), but it is redemption from a "vain manner of life" by a new birth of the soul (i. 23), which makes possible a joyful obedience (i. 2). The writer very clearly sees in Christ the fulfilment of the second Isaiah's ideal "Servant of Jehovah" ; compare ii. 24, 25, and iii. 18, with Is. liii. 5, 6. And the assurance that the death of Christ has this redeeming power he finds in the fact of His resurrection (i. 3 ; iii. 21, 22).

The difficult passage about Christ, after His death, "preaching unto the spirits in prison" (iii. 19, 20 ; also iv. 6), appears to have been suggested by the Book of Enoch (ch. x.), where the spirits of the wicked antediluvians are represented as "bound fast under the hills of the earth for seventy generations." The idea is that the Spirit of Christ, while disembodied, was able to offer salvation to the disembodied spirits who are regarded as awaiting the resurrection of judgment. (The writer cannot, therefore, have regarded their punishment as final and irrevocable). He seems to have thought of the Spirit of Christ as leaving His body at death, to come back to it, and raise it to a new and glorified condition, at the resurrection.

But he goes further. The Spirit of Christ, he suggests, did not *begin to be* when Jesus came to this earth in the flesh. Not only was He "foreknown before the foundation of the world" (i. 20), *i.e.*, He not only existed in the Divine idea ; but it was His Spirit that inspired the prophets of old (i. 10, 11). He must therefore have had an actual, and not a merely ideal, existence. Whether the writer reached this belief in the pre-existence of Christ by himself, or whether it was suggested to him by Paul, we cannot say. But this is the first time, in our study of the development of Christian thought, that this conception

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has appeared. *The belief in the Incarnation has now begun to take shape and find expression.* That pre-existent Spirit did not merely "come upon" Jesus; He *was* the Spirit, "manifested at the end of the times" (i. 20) in human form.

Yet the simplicity of the writer's thought, and his lack of what might be supposed to be theological precision, is shown in his use of Trinitarian expressions in i. 2 (which should be compared with Paul's great benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14). There is first "the fore-knowledge of God the Father"; but it is "sanctification of the Spirit" that leads to "obedience," and to experience of the purifying power in the soul of the "blood of Jesus Christ." It is very clear that the whole interest of the writer is not speculative but *ethical* from first to last: the salvation in which he and his readers rejoice is a moral renovation wrought in their souls by God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the presence of His living Spirit with them and in them (note the Pauline expression *in Christ* in iii. 16; and compare "whom, not having seen, ye love," i. 8, with Paul's great saying, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" in Rom. viii. 35).

The writer, like the rest of the primitive Church, looks confidently forward to the speedy return of the glorified Christ to finish the work of salvation He had begun on earth, which he calls "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (i. 5, 7, 13; iv. 5, 13; v. 1, 4); but he nowhere uses the rather crude eschatological imagery of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

CHAPTER V

THE GREATER EPISTLES OF PAUL

In this chapter we study the Christology of the four Letters addressed by Paul to the Galatians, Corinthians and Romans. The precise order and date of the letters is immaterial for our purpose ; but the order is probably that given above, and they all appear to date from the time of Paul's second and third Missionary Journeys, that is, about 53-56 A.D.

The Epistle to the Galatians.—The chief purpose of this fiery Epistle is twofold : first Paul insists on his authority as an Apostle, commissioned not by man at second-hand, but directly by Christ Himself ; and secondly he warns his converts in the most emphatic manner against the teaching of some Judaising Christians, who have been at once impugning his authority and pressing the importance of circumcision and the other observances of the Mosaic law. The letter to the Galatians is a magnificent vindication of Christian liberty as against the bondage of outward ceremonies—a liberty which, as Paul is careful to insist, does not mean licence but “ walking by the Spirit.”

That being his primary object in writing, it is natural that allusions to the Person of Christ are only thrown out incidentally. Most of what Paul has taught his Galatian converts about Jesus and His place and work is obviously taken for granted. There is no explicit allusion to the human life or teaching of Jesus, except that He is spoken of as “ born of a woman ” (iv. 4). This by itself, however, is enough to show that Paul regarded him as really a man. His death on the Cross, and still more His resurrection from the dead, are insisted on again and again.

It is in virtue of the resurrection that Paul is able to couple Jesus Christ with God the Father as the source of his authority as an Apostle (i. 1) ; and the death of Jesus is spoken of as a voluntary sacrifice “ for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world ” (i. 4). He

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is the "Son of God" (i. 16 ; ii. 20 ; iv. 4, etc.), which clearly means more for Paul than that He is the Messiah of the Jews. "The Divine sonship of Christ is thought of as personal, and not merely official and titular."* It is true Paul also says "ye are *all* sons of God" (all, that is, who are "in Christ Jesus, through faith," iii. 26) ; but this sonship is by "adoption" (iv. 5) and "does not make us the equals of Christ."

A great deal is said in this letter about the "faith in Christ" by which we are "justified." It is clear that Paul assumes that his converts know what he means by these terms. The "faith" is something much deeper than any mere acceptance of a doctrine about Christ ; and the "justification" is much more than any mere legal acquittal. It is "justification *in* Christ" (ii. 17), an experience in which the believer is mystically united with Christ, so that Christ's death and resurrection and position of sonship with God in some way become his. This conception of the "mystical union" comes out again and again (most of all in ii. 20, but also in iii. 27, 28 ; iv. 19 ; v. 24, etc.), and it is one of Paul's deepest and most characteristic thoughts. It is "because we are sons [by adoption] that God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying [as Jesus did] 'Abba, Father'" (iv. 6) ; that is, Jesus Christ is able to impart His own experience of sonship to those who are truly united to Him by faith. The "Spirit" in which these live and "walk in line" (v. 25) is the Spirit of Jesus, for it is often spoken of simply as "Christ" ; and it is in virtue of this inward experience wrought by "faith," whether it is called "justification" or "adoption," that the true believer will naturally bring forth the "fruits of the Spirit" (v. 22), and live the pure ethical life without any bondage to precepts.

Thus in the Epistle to the Galatians we have Christ presented as One who has died for men in the flesh, but lives in them in the Spirit, and who becomes to their inner lives what only God can be. Yet Paul nowhere in this letter makes Christ the equal of God.

The Epistle to the Romans.—We take this next because it develops with greater care and elaboration the same essential

* Adeney, *The New Testament Doctrine of Christ*, pp. 87, 89.

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thoughts that Paul has already expressed in writing to the Galatians. The root idea concerning Christ, which governs the Epistle, is expressed in ch. i. 3, 4. Paul here asserts the human life of Jesus ; His fulfilment of the Jewish Messianic prophecies by appearing as a descendant of David ; and His resurrection,—which, taken together with the “ spirit of holiness ” that animated His life, proved Him to be the Son of God and the Lord of men (compare xiv. 9). The sinless life of Jesus is again alluded to in xv. 3, “ For Christ also pleased not Himself.”*

The great thought of the Epistle, as in that to the Galatians, is that the death and resurrection of Jesus are the means by which “ a righteousness of God is revealed ” (i. 17) that can be appropriated by faith : a righteousness higher and more effective than any that could be attained either by the natural conscience of man, or by observance of the Jewish law. The “ faith ” which appropriates this righteousness is, just as in Galatians, an opening of the soul to receive Christ, whereby His death and resurrection are repeated in the believer’s experience of death to sin and rising into a new life, and whereby also the believer shares His standing before God. This “ mysticism ” appears chiefly in ch. vi. (which is simply an expansion of Gal. ii. 20), and is really the key to the “ evangelicalism ” of ch. iii.† “ Justification ” (iii. 20f., v. 1, etc.) and “ adoption ” (viii. 15-17) are used with exactly the same meaning that they bear in Galatians.

A further development is found in ch. v., where Jesus Christ is compared to Adam (v. 12-21). As Adam is the head of the race physically, and through his sin the whole race is regarded as having become sinful, so Christ is the

* The phrase “ in the likeness of sinful flesh ” (viii. 3) has been much discussed. It probably means, not that the human body of Jesus was a mere appearance (the idea known as “ Docetism ”), nor that He shared our sinfulness ; but that “ the sinful flesh of man is the pattern on which Christ’s sinless flesh was formed : in Him alone we see the flesh in perfect relation to the spirit.” (H. R. Mackintosh).

† Most of the difficulty of understanding and accepting Paul’s language in Rom. iii. 21-26 arises from the attempt to interpret it alone and without taking account of the completion of his thoughts in ch. vi.-viii. The “ justification ” by which the believer is “ accounted righteous ” in God’s sight cannot possibly be separated from the “ sanctification ” (vi. 19, 22), by which a new moral life becomes really his.

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head of the race spiritually, and through His righteousness "the many" (*i.e.*, all who unite themselves to Him by faith), will be made righteous. And all this, however it may be couched at times in legal or Rabbinic phraseology, is due to the manifestation of God's *love*—the love "which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (viii. 31-39). It is this that dominates the soul of the Apostle throughout, so that he himself would be willing even to face perdition "for his brethren's sake" (ix. 3); and this knowledge of love, and power of love, have all come to him through Christ.

Thus his affirmations as to Christ's nature are no mere theories reached by speculative or philosophic thought; they are the outcome of a most intense realisation of what Christ is to him in actual experience. It is in this light, probably, that we must explain ch. ix. 5, which is almost the only passage in Paul's writings where Christ appears to be identified with God.*

It may be noted that there are no clear allusions, either in Galatians or Romans, to the pre-existence of Christ;† and that His "coming," which is so prominent in 1 and 2 Thess., is hardly mentioned. In Rom. ii. 16 Paul looks forward to a Judgment to be exercised by God through Christ; and in viii. 23 he speaks of an eager hope of "the redemption of our body." But these references are only vague. It seems that, with experience, his consciousness of Christ's living presence deepened, and that he thought less of a future apocalyptic appearance. His conception of the "Kingdom of God," at any rate, is purely ethical and not apocalyptic, for he defines it (xiv. 17) as "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The Epistles to the Corinthians. The fundamental thoughts of the place and work of Christ, which characterise Galatians and Romans, equally dominate these Letters. The death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection as the "Lord of glory" are constantly emphasised (1 Cor. i. 23; ii. 2, 8, and the whole of ch. xv.; 2 Cor. v. 14, xiii. 4, etc.).

* Reference to the margin of the R.V. will show that it is by no means certain that in this passage Paul does call Christ "God blessed for ever"; but the best authorities appear to agree that this reading is probably the right one.

† It seems probable that these letters were written *before* 1 Peter where (as we have seen) the idea of pre-existence does appear.

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The real human life of Jesus is taken for granted, and is specially dwelt on in 1 Cor. xi. 23-25, where Paul gives the account which he had "received of the Lord" concerning the acts and words of Jesus at the Last Supper. His sinlessness is asserted in 2 Cor. v. 21, and His "meekness and gentleness" in x. 1. In fact the Person of Jesus Christ, and His work on earth as a man, is the "foundation" of everything (1 Cor. iii. 11).

It is true that in 2 Cor. v. 16 Paul speaks somewhat scornfully of the knowledge of Christ "according to the flesh"*; and we may admit that in his pre-occupation with the living and reigning Christ he hardly keeps the balance true. It is in accordance with his entire subordination of the physical to the spiritual that he asserts that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50),—which passage taken with his statement that the appearance of the risen Christ to himself was parallel with those to the other Apostles (xv. 8), shows that Paul did not regard the resurrection of Jesus as merely the re-animation of His physical body.

The "mysticism" of Gal. ii. 20 and Rom. vi. appears again frequently here, in the passages where Paul speaks of himself as "in Christ" (2 Cor. xii. 2, 19, etc.), and Christ "in" the believers (xiii. 5). And that this indwelling cannot be separated from his thought of "justification" is shown in 1 Cor. vi. 11, where the order of the terms "washed, sanctified, justified," makes havoc of much "systematic theology." The conception of Christ as the "second Adam," the head of the spiritual race, which we have noted in Romans, is even more clearly defined in 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, 45-47; and it is only a varied expression of the same thought when Christ is spoken of as the "body" of which His disciples are the organs (xii. 12-27). Christ is Himself the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17), whose life animates them all.

But there are expressions in these Letters which go beyond anything we find in Galatians and Romans, and indicate that Paul (probably during his residence at Ephesus) was influenced to some extent by the philosophic thought of which we shall have to speak later.

* By refusing to know "a Christ according to the flesh," he probably means that the ordinary Jewish conceptions of the Messiah will never satisfy him, though at one time they did.

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The *pre-existence* of Christ is assumed in 1 Cor. x. 4, where Paul sees in the rock out of which Moses caused water to flow for the Israelites a symbol of the perennial Source of their spiritual refreshment, and adds, "*the rock was Christ.*" The Incarnation is clearly stated, probably for the first time in Christian literature, in 2 Cor. viii. 9,—where Paul, urging liberality in giving to the collection he was making for Judea, adduces the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, "*though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor.*" The statement is thrown out quite incidentally, as an allusion to something well known and accepted.

But, further, Paul uses expressions to set forth the nature of Christ in His essential relation to God, the like of which we have not met with before. He is "the *image* (εἰκών) of God" (2 Cor. iv. 4-6) : the Divine glory is revealed "in the face of Jesus Christ." And in virtue of this close relation with the Father, Christ is associated with Him, in Paul's thought, in the work of creation. "There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through whom are all things*" (1 Cor. viii. 6). These are expressions characteristic of the "Logos" philosophy, though Paul never uses the term "Logos" of Christ.*

And yet, while Paul thus brings Jesus so close to God, he always speaks of Him as subordinate to the Father. God is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. i. 3) ; "Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 23) ; "the head of Christ is God" (xi. 3). Christ is not only the "image" of God ; He is the "image" also of the perfect man, into which Christians are being transformed (2 Cor. iii. 18). The most remarkable passage in which this subordination is stated is 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, where the triumph of Christ over all enemies, to which Paul looks forward, is followed by His complete surrender of His Kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all."

* See note appended to Chapter VII. (page 52).

CHAPTER VI

PAUL'S EPISTLES FROM PRISON

The letters of Paul with which we deal in this chapter are those to the Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians. (The letter to Philemon was probably despatched at the same time as that to the church of Colossæ, but as it contains little or nothing of a Christological character we pass it over). These letters were probably written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome, the beginning of which is mentioned in Acts xxviii.

The Epistle to the Colossians.—It is in this letter, especially in the first chapter, that the highest development of Paul's thought in regard to Jesus Christ is found. But here we should note again that it is a practical, not a merely speculative, interest which leads him to express these exalted ideas. The Christians at Colossæ were in danger of being led astray by a spurious philosophy (ii. 8)—apparently a kind of mixed Jewish and Oriental theosophy—which laid great stress at once on ascetic practices, and on the worship of angels (ii. 16-18), as a kind of inner mystery into which those who wished to lead the highest life must be initiated. These intermediate angelic beings were supposed to contain the Divine "fulness" (πλήρωμα): they were the mediators of God's grace to men; and those who wish to attain the highest spiritual experience must come into worshipful relations to these beings, and, to this end, must purify their lives by avoiding entanglement with gross matter.

Paul meets this error by asserting in the strongest possible way that the Divine "fulness" is in Christ alone (i. 19; ii. 9).* He is Himself the Divine "mystery"

* The difficult word "bodily" (σωματικῶς) in Col. ii. 9 shows (a) that Paul's thought of Christ's exaltation was always closely bound up with that of His humiliation in the flesh; and (b) that the "fulness" for him meant fulness of redeeming and sanctifying power: the thought is ethical, not magical or transcendental (compare i. 21, 22).

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(i. 26 ; ii. 2 ; iv. 3). He has by his Cross triumphed over all the angelic powers, which to Paul's mind seem to be evil as well as good (ii. 15) ; and those who come into vital union with Him by faith have no need to practise asceticism, which will only " puff up the fleshly mind " (ii. 18), making its devotees fancy themselves superior to others.*

There is clearly, therefore, a directly practical purpose in the very exalted thoughts of Christ which Paul puts in the forefront of his letter. The brief phrase " through whom are all things " (1 Cor. viii. 6), which we noted in the last chapter as an indication that Paul was acquainted with the Logos philosophy, he here develops. He begins by an appeal to his hearers' experience of salvation " into the kingdom of the Son of God's love " (i. 13), and leads up from this to speak of Christ as " the image (*εικων*) of the invisible God " † ; in whom, through whom, and unto whom, all things were created, whether in the heavens or upon the earth ; who is " before all things," and in whom " all things stand together." That is to say, " Christ " is the eternal Divine Spirit that brought the world into being, sustains it as an orderly cosmos, and is the end to which the whole creation moves.‡ The special point of all this is that Christ is superior to the angelic powers (i. 16), which have no being apart from Him. It is in *Him*, as has been said, and not in the angels, that " the fulness " dwells (i. 19) ; that " all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden " (ii. 3).

The act of renunciation by which, in the Incarnation, this Divine Spirit took actual human form, is not dwelt on in this letter ; but the allusions to the " cross " and " blood " of Christ (i. 20), especially the phrase " reconciled in the body of His flesh through death " (i. 21, 22),

* The " rudiments of the world " (ii. 20) means (as in Galatians iv. 3, 9, 10) Jewish heathen observances. The word " rudiments " (*στοιχεῖα*) means literally " little lines " ; hence simplest things, first elements of the world, and sometimes the heavenly bodies, and so observance of " days, months and years " based originally on the worship of them.

† He is also, as in Corinthians, the " image " of the perfect man (Col. iii. 10).

‡ These ideas will be better understood when we have dealt with the doctrine of the Logos.

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show that Paul's exalted Christology does not free him from the historical basis of his faith. The "mysticism" that characterises Galatians and Romans is equally prominent here: the "mystery" is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (i. 27); His death and resurrection have to be repeated in the experience of His disciples (i. 24; ii. 12, 20; iii. 1-4). Paul's "striving" is not his own, but the mighty "working" of Christ in him (i. 29); the peace in the disciples' hearts is Christ's peace (iii. 15); and what they have to do is not to worry after some superior holiness of their own by ascetic practices, but simply to let the Spirit of Christ live out His own perfect life in them, unhindered by their own self-will.

The Epistle to the Ephesians.—This beautiful letter, addressed probably not to Ephesus but to various churches in Asia Minor which Paul had not personally visited (i. 15, iii. 2),* is accepted as Pauline by many scholars. Dr. James Moffatt, in his *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (pp. 385-9) definitely sets aside the view that it was written by Paul; but perhaps he hardly does justice to the idea that it may have been actually written by one of Paul's associates under his supervision, just as we have seen reason to suppose 1 Peter may have been written by Silvanus with general directions from Peter.†

In any case, apart from the note of controversy (which only appears here in iv. 14), the resemblance to Colossians, both in the thoughts and in the order in which they are presented, is very close. The lofty Christology of that Letter is repeated here in almost identical terms (Eph. i. 5-10, 20-22; iii. 3-5, 10, 11, etc.).

One point not dwelt on in Colossians, and in which the thought of this Letter marks an advance even on that, is the unity of Jew and Gentile in the Divine purpose (ii. 11-22; iii. 1-12; iv. 1-6). This is based on "the supremacy of Christ as the cosmic and religious head of the universe." The theme of the Epistle is "not simply the unity of the Church, but the unity of the Church in Jesus Christ supreme. This Paul had not preached

* Many students, since Marcion in the second century, have supposed that this is "the Epistle from Laodicea" mentioned in Col. iv. 16.

† See p. 31.

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before.”* But this ideal unity could only be made actual through the redeeming efficacy of His death and resurrection (i. 7 ; ii. 13, 16 ; i. 20 ; ii. 4-6), and by the reproduction in the lives of His disciples of Christ's perfect character and love (ii. 10 ; iii. 14-18 ; iv. 13, 15, 20-24 ; v. 1, 2). So that the human life of Jesus is assumed as the basis of the whole system of teaching, here as elsewhere.

It is noteworthy that there is no allusion in this Letter to the “ coming ” of Christ, while in Colossians there is only one (Col. iii. 4). It seems clear that, while the idea remained in the background of the Pauline consciousness, it was the exaltation of Christ, both through eternity and now as the outcome of His work of lowly love for men, that filled the writer's conscious thoughts. The “ kingdom,” here as elsewhere in these writings, is primarily an ethical and not an eschatological conception (Eph. v. 5).

The Epistle to the Philippians.—Apart from the Pastoral Epistles, which are doubtfully Pauline, this is the latest of Paul's letters, and has been appropriately called his “ swan-song.” His trial is imminent, and he knows that it may probably issue in martyrdom. The letter is, if possible, more full of the spirit of love than any of the others. He looks forward to the day “ of Christ ” (i. 6, 10 ; ii. 16), when He will be manifested from heaven to complete His work of salvation (iii. 20). Yet He is no distant or merely future Saviour ; his Spirit is “ supplied ” abundantly in the present, so that to Paul “ to live is Christ ” (i. 21), and God through Him will “ fulfil every need ” of His loved ones (iv. 19).

The only passage of great Christological importance in this letter is ii. 5-11,—a lyrical outburst† which expresses more fully than any other in Paul's writings his thoughts about the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. And yet, as usual, it occurs quite incidentally, not as teaching anything new, but as a powerful appeal for the practice of humility and love to others. “ Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” who, in His Incarnation

* Moffatt, p. 393.

† See Moffatt, p. 167.

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and Crucifixion, gave up everything for your sake, and so found His true glory.

There are several remarkable expressions in this passage. Christ is "in the *form* (μορφή) of God"—which probably means exactly what Paul has elsewhere expressed by the word *image* (2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15): He perfectly manifests to our apprehension the infinite and unsearchable attributes of the Divine nature. But, though equality with God is within His reach, He does not grasp at it—on the contrary He gives up that which is already His. He "empties Himself" of His Divine honour, and takes on him the "form" of a slave, assuming the "likeness"* of men. He goes further, and, being really and truly a man, becomes "obedient unto death"—and this no ordinary death, but "the death of the Cross. *Wherefore* also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name ('Lord') which is above every name."

It should be noted that in this wonderful passage (which deserves most careful pondering) the equality of Christ with God is not stated. Such equality He might possess, but He refuses it. It is not He who exalts Himself, but God who exalts Him. So that here, just as in Corinthians and elsewhere, Christ is subordinated to the Father. His highest glory is reached by surrendering glory, and submitting, in obedience to His Father's will, to the limitations of human life and death. But, inasmuch as He is in the "form" of God, does not this carry with it the thought that the Divine nature itself is perfectly manifested in this sacrifice and loving self-surrender—that *God Himself* reaches His true glory by the self-sacrifice of love? This inference is not explicitly drawn by Paul, but it seems inevitable, and we shall meet with it later.

The Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) we here pass over, as we find it difficult to believe that, in their present form at least, they are the work of Paul.

We conclude our study of Paul's Christology by a quotation from a recent study of the Resurrection.†

"Paul is no metaphysician concerned with ideas, but

* The same word as in Rom. viii. 3, "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh" (See note, p. 36).

† *The Resurrection and Modern Thought*, by W. J. Sparrow Simpson, D.D., pp. 206-208.

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a Jew concerned with facts and persons. He builds his inferences on the foundation of historic occurrences, in the absence of which his whole conceptions disappear. . . . Hints and implications scattered throughout his letters prove a knowledge of the historic Jesus possessed yet left unutilised. He knew many details, yet he did not build his Christianity upon them. The solution plainly is that he did not consider our Lord as a teacher like one of the Prophets. He did not consider the Gospel to consist in anything that Jesus said. If the Crucified Jesus was the exalted Christ, the whole interest must centre in His exaltation, and in His death, seen in the glory of the same. The Messiah was to S. Paul no mere instructor : He was the Mediator between God and man. Christianity was to him the religion of redemption. It was inseparable from a definite Christology."

CHAPTER VII

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, AND THE IDEA OF THE LOGOS

[The volume containing *Hebrews* in the "Century Bible," by Prof. A. S. Peake, is most valuable for reference, alike in its masterly Introduction and its Commentary, particularly on the first chapter. See also *The Epistle of Priesthood*, by Alexander Nairne, B.D.]

This wonderful treatise, containing the most eloquent and sustained argument of any book in the New Testament, was not received by the Church generally as canonical before the fourth century, and then, probably, mainly because it was by that time supposed to have been written by Paul. This, however, it certainly was not. Who the author was we shall probably never know. Harnack, followed by J. Rendel Harris, has adduced weighty arguments in favour of its having been written by Priscilla, with the help of her husband Aquila. (See Peake, "Century Bible," pp. 28-38). It is quoted without acknowledgment by Clement of Rome as early as 95 A.D. If it was really written by a woman, it is easy to understand why, in the existing state of feeling towards women, the authorship was suppressed. It seems most probable that it was addressed not to "Hebrews" generally, but to a small community of Jewish Christians at Rome, or in some other part of Italy,* who, in the stress of persecution, were in danger of abandoning their Christianity for Judaism. The date is somewhere between 60 and 90 A.D.

The central thought of the author is "that Christianity is superior to Judaism and is the perfect religion, because

* In this case "they of Italy" in xiii. 24 will be some Italian Christians who, with the author, are away from home, perhaps in exile (compare Acts xviii. 2).

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it belongs to the heavenly order, while Judaism belongs to the earthly, and is stamped with its ineffectiveness" (Peake). The writer deals in detail with the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, to show that they are but shadows of the real and eternal order of things which had been disclosed in Christ. This is the only book in the New Testament in which the Levitical ceremonies are treated as "types" of something higher, the only one where the thought moves habitually among conceptions of sacrifice, and the only one in which Christ is called a "priest."

The Alexandrian Philosophy. This seems, on the whole, the best point at which to interpolate a section dealing with the philosophy of the "Logos," which, as we have seen, undoubtedly underlay some of Paul's expressions in regard to Christ.*

Two streams of thought, Greek and Jewish, were imperfectly fused by *Philo the Jew* (born 20 B.C.), who flourished at Alexandria during, and after, the life of Jesus Christ. Different schools of Greek thinkers, especially the Stoics, had made much of the LOGOS as the principle of Reason which is immanent in the world, and which expresses itself in the unity and order of Nature. The word "Logos" means both *Reason* (or *Thought*) and the *Word* which expresses it, and the Stoics used it with both meanings, making it the ruling and guiding principle of the "life according to nature."† It remained for them, however, an impersonal principle, and personal qualities were never attributed to it.

The second stream of thought is found in the Old Testament, where "the word of Jehovah" is regarded as His agent in creation, providence, and revelation (e.g. Ps. xxxiii. 6). In the "Wisdom literature" the same idea is attached to the Divine "Wisdom," which becomes more and more detached, as it were, from God Himself, till it is almost regarded as a personal being (see Prov. viii. esp. verses 22-31). In the later literature this process is carried further. The book of "Ecclesiasticus" begins, "All

* See pp. 39 and 41. For this section I am much indebted to Dean Inge, *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, especially chap. ii. on "The Sources and Growth of the Logos Christology."

† Compare Wordsworth, *The Ode to Duty*.

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wisdom cometh from the Lord, and *is with him* (cf. John i. 1) for ever." "The Wisdom of Solomon," says, "For she (Wisdom) is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things; and, remaining in herself, reneweth all things; and from generation to generation, passing into holy souls, she maketh men friends of God and prophets" (Wisdom, vii. 26, 27).

In both cases the tendency to "hypostatise," or make a separate being of, the Thought or Word or Wisdom of God, was due to a growing sense of the Divine infinitude, and to the difficulty of bringing the Infinite and Incomprehensible into real relations with a finite and concrete world. The "Logos" was one of the many attempts of philosophers and theologians to bridge the gulf.

Philo takes up and tries to blend together the Greek and the Hebrew conceptions, making the Logos the cornerstone of his philosophy. God is "unqualified and pure being; the Logos dwells with Him as His vicegerent; by his agency the worlds were made. . . He is in the closest relations with the human spirit, operating in man as the higher reason" (Inge). It has been debated whether Philo's Logos is personal or impersonal. The truth seems to be that he wavers in his conception. But it can be quite safely said that neither he nor any of his predecessors, whether Greek or Jewish, ever once thought of an Incarnation of the Logos in an actual human life; and it is to be noted that he never connects the idea in any way with the Messianic hopes of his people.

It seems certain that in the later half of the first century the Logos idea was quite familiar to educated minds, both among Greeks and Jews, in the Greek-speaking cities of the Empire; and that it was taken up and used by Christian leaders to commend to such people their thought of Christ. When and by whom it was that the identification of Christ with the Logos was first made we cannot say. But it is important to remember that they did not reach the idea of the incarnation of the eternal Christ, and of His pre-existence, by reflection on the doctrines of the Logos. They reached the idea of His pre-existence independently;

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and the belief in the incarnation was “not only not taken from Philo, but was totally opposed to his philosophy (Inge).

Alexandrian Ideas in “Hebrews.”—The root idea of this Epistle, that the Jewish ordinances are only fleeting copies or reflections of heavenly and eternal realities, has affinities, through Philo, with Plato’s doctrine of archetypal ideas as the only realities, of which the things of the finite and sensible world are but shadows (see esp. Heb. viii. 5, ix. 23, 24, x. 1, xii. 18-22). And though the writer speaks of Christ not as the “Logos” but as the “Son,” the terms he uses to express His divine glory are often those of Philo and the “Wisdom of Solomon” (note especially the words “effulgence” and “very image” (χαράκτῆρ) in i. 3). The eternal nature of God is engraved, as it were, on Christ like the inscription on a seal, and it shines forth in Him the perfect revealer. In i. 6 He is the “first-born” Son, a term used by Philo of the Logos.

Redemption by Incarnation.—While, as we shall see in a moment, the writer holds strongly to the real humanity of the incarnate Christ, he thinks of Him as coming “not *out of* humanity, but *into it*.” The pre-existence is everywhere assumed (xi. 26). He does not dwell upon the “self-emptying,” as Paul does in Phil. ii., but it is just as real to his mind (ii. 14-16, x. 5). Christ “shares flesh and blood” with the “children of God.” He yields Himself up even to death (ii. 9); and wins through this self-sacrifice not only His own exaltation in glory but redemption for humanity (i. 3, ii. 15, 17, &c.).

There is no trace whatever of “Docetism”* in this treatise. Indeed the writer says more daring things about the limitations of Christ in the body than any other New Testament writer, unless it be Mark. He constantly uses of Him the bare name, “Jesus,” a thing Paul scarcely ever does. Jesus was “made in all things like unto his brethren.” He was “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin” (iv. 15, ii. 18). He is our brother (ii. 11). He, though the Captain (ἀρχηγός) of our salvation, had to be

* The doctrine, insisted on by the Gnostics and others, that the human body of Jesus was an appearance or phantom, not a body of flesh and blood like ours.

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made "perfect through sufferings" (ii. 10). He is not only the High Priest but the "Apostle" of our confession (iii. 1). He "offered up strong crying and tears to him that was able to save him from death," and "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (v. 7, 8). He is the Captain (*ἀρχηγός*), and perfect example, of faith and endurance (xii. 2).

If we ask how the writer was able to hold together, without any sense of contradiction, such thoughts of the Divine glory and of the human limitations of Jesus, the answer will not be found in any doctrine of His Messiahship, which he never mentions. We must look for it rather (*a*) in his absolute assurance of the fact of Christ's sinlessness (iv. 15, vii. 26-28), and (*b*) in the experience, which he knew his readers shared, of a new life won for them by Christ through His death and resurrection, and of His continued presence with them (ii. 3, 4, 11; iii. 6; iv. 3; ix. 11-14, etc.).* Moreover (*c*) the thought of the Logos, which is in the back of the writer's mind, brought the Divine and the human together, in the sense that there was something human and self-limited in God, and something Divine in man. It helped to bridge, as we have noted, the gulf between the Infinite and the finite, though not by imagining an intermediate being, or beings, neither God nor man.

The Son and the Angels.—The first chapter is devoted mainly to proving, by such a use of the Old Testament as was customary with the writer and his Jewish readers, the superiority of Christ as the Son of God to all the angelic powers in whom they believed. This is closely connected with the argument that follows; for the Jewish Law was supposed to have been "spoken through angels" (ii. 2, compare Acts vii. 53 and Gal. iii. 19); the writer is preparing the way for showing that Christ has brought the reality of which the Law was only the shadow. The "angels" are contrasted throughout with the "Son," and put in a lower category. It is startling to note that they are not regarded as belonging to the spiritual and eternal world.

* The phrase "through an eternal Spirit" means that "the Spirit which was in Him, and constituted His personal being, was indestructible by death, and enabled Him to pursue His high-priestly vocation in the heavenly sanctuary" (H. R. Mackintosh).

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In Jewish thought they were very closely connected with the material universe ; and the writer clearly asserts (i. 7) that God transforms them into impersonal natural forces (see Peake in " Century Bible "). The Son is " better " than they, both in nature and in character. He alone has the power to redeem men from sin by incarnation and by the sacrifice of His life.

It is a difficult question, and one probably that cannot be answered, whether the writer applies the term " Son " to Christ in His pre-incarnate existence. He does, however, think of Him as identical in time and eternity (xiii. 8). The " Sonship " is not merely titular, given to Him because He is the Messiah. The writer's thoughts do not dwell on His Messiahship ; they go behind it, as in Matt. xi. 27, to that personal relation to God which made Him the Messiah and the Revealer. But this Sonship does not make Him the equal of God (except in i. 8, a difficult and disputed passage—see note in Peake, p. 86). God, not Christ, is the " Judge of all " (xii. 23) ; and Christ is placed on " the right hand," not on the throne, of " the Majesty on high " (i. 3 ; viii. 1 ; xii. 2).

Christ as High Priest.—This is one of the most characteristic thoughts of the epistle, and runs nearly all through. The special idea connected with it is that Christ, a " priest after the order of Melchizedek," with no beginning of days or end of life (that is, belonging to the eternal order of things), offered the only perfect sacrifice that could really take away sin—not in any outward or " forensic " sense—from the inmost heart and conscience (ix. 11-14). The sacrifice was that of His own life. The writer takes for granted the thoughts as to the efficacy of sacrifice in which His readers had been trained—that it assured men of acceptance and communion with God (x. 19)—but his great point is that the inward cleansing which outward sacrifice could never effect (x. 1-4, etc.), but which is necessary for full communion, has been wrought by that of Christ (x. 22). " Thus Christianity proved itself to be the perfect religion, in that it perfectly satisfied the religious instinct for fellowship with God " (Peake).

If for a moment we compare the writer's thoughts with those of Paul, we note that his Christology, when we get

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behind the peculiar form into which it is thrown, is practically the same. The chief difference is the absence here of that thought of "mystical union" with Christ, in which His death and resurrection life are reproduced in the believer's experience, which is the deepest and most moving conception in Paul's writings.

Note on Christ as the Divine "Wisdom."—Since this book was written, Dr. Rendel Harris has published the result of some investigations into the genesis of the Logos conception of Christ (in *The Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel*, Camb. Univ. Press, 1917). He shows reasons for believing that the followers of Jesus began their Christology by identifying Him with the Divine Wisdom (who speaks in Prov. viii.), and that possibly this may have been due to expressions used by Jesus Himself. Most of the Christological terms employed by Paul and by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews can be paralleled from Proverbs and the later "Wisdom" literature. To Jews who enquired "Who and what was Jesus Christ?" the first answer was, "He was the incarnation of the Divine Wisdom." This, however, would mean little to Greeks; and for them the further identification was made of "Wisdom" with "Logos"—with an idea that was already in their minds. This process was facilitated by the fact that "Logos" being masculine, while "Wisdom" (*Sophia*) is feminine, it was easier to speak of the Logos than of Wisdom as the "Son" of God.

To the present writer it appears that Dr. Harris has gone far to prove his case. If it wins the assent of scholars it will clear up many difficulties. In particular, it will account for the development of the New Testament Christology without the supposition that the Jewish Christians were to any considerable extent influenced by Greek philosophy, or even by the doctrines of Philo. This is of great importance in rightly estimating the thought of the Fourth Gospel, to which the next two chapters are devoted.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES OF JOHN

[The volume of the "Century Bible" containing the Gospel of John, by McClymont, is useful; also *The Philosophy of the Fourth Gospel*, by J. S. Johnston (S.P.C.K.). Dean Inge's *Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, chapters ii. and iii., on the Logos Christology, may be referred to again; also his masterly paper on "The Theology of the Fourth Gospel," in the *Cambridge Biblical Essays* (Macmillan, 1909)].

The present writer has already briefly dealt with the problem of the nature, date and authorship of the Fourth Gospel (see *Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*, ch. xxii.); and it is needless now to say more than that in his view there are sufficient grounds for holding this priceless Gospel to embody the recollections and reflections of one who had been an actual disciple of Jesus. The writer was certainly a Jew, who wrote, probably late in his life, to interpret the Person of Jesus, in the light of his own long Christian experience, to the Greeks of Asia Minor. The First Epistle of John is really a Sermon, applying the same essential thoughts that appear in the Gospel to the difficulties and dangers that were besetting the Christian Church in Asia Minor at the end of the first century; and, the style as well as the thoughts being almost identical in the two writings, there appears no convincing reason to doubt that they are by the same author. The little letters known as the Second and Third Epistles may be by the same hand; and if so, since the author of them styles himself the "Elder" (or Presbyter), they support the conclusion, which on the whole commends itself to the present writer, that John the Presbyter, rather than the

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son of Zebedee, is responsible for all four writings.*

The Fourth Gospel is a work of profound spiritual genius, and marks the highest point reached by the early followers of Jesus in interpreting, to themselves and others, the Person of their Master. The writer is obviously familiar with Alexandrian speculations concerning the Logos,† but he adds to them the wholly new assertion that "the Logos became flesh" (i. 14)—new, that is, to Philo and his disciples, but not new to Christian readers of the Gospel. The "Logos" is introduced as a conception with which they are already familiar, just as a modern writer might use the word "Evolution." When and by whom it was that the pre-existent and eternal Christ of whom Paul had written was first identified with the Logos we do not know. The conception of the Logos-Christ is *implicit*, as we have seen, in expressions used by Paul in his later Epistles and by the author of Hebrews; but they never use the word "Logos."‡ Whether we owe it to Paul or to some other, the identification was a masterstroke of inspired genius, which finally freed Christianity from Jewish narrowness, and made it a possible faith for minds trained in Greek philosophy. It was, in the true sense of the word, a *theory*, based upon facts of experience that demanded explanation—the facts of the radiant personality of Jesus and of the new moral life which, by His revelation of the Father, He had brought to His true disciples. It marks the first great step in the "Hellenizing" of Christianity—a process which some deplore, but which was inevitable if the religion of Jesus

* Dr. Moffatt, in his *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, while definitely ruling out John the Apostle as the author of these writings, since he accepts (perhaps too unreservedly) the statement attributed to Papias that the Apostle was put to death by the Jews, leaves the door open for their having all been written, or at least authenticated, by John the Presbyter. He does not go further, however, in the direction of any positive conclusion than to regard them as the product of an early "Johannine" school of Christian thought. On the other hand, Dom John Chapman, O.S.B., argues with much learning that John the Presbyter and John the Apostle are one and the same, and that the story of the Apostle's early martyrdom is unbelievable (*John the Presbyter and the Fourth Gospel* Clarendon Press, 1911).

† See above, pp. 47–49.

‡ See note on Christ as "Wisdom" appended to chapter vii (page 52).

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was to hold its own in the arena of rational controversy.*

Christ as the Logos or Son of God.—The root message of the author is that through the Logos-Christ, incarnated as Jesus of Nazareth, the real nature of God has been manifested in an actual human life, and that so the age-long process of revelation is completed. After the Prologue (i. 1-18) the word "Logos" disappears, and is replaced by "Son." It is not possible to say positively, any more than in the case of Hebrews, whether the author applies the conception of Sonship to the pre-incarnate Christ, or only to the incarnate. But the thought of Jesus as the incarnate Logos is in the back of his mind throughout, and many passages (*e.g.*, v. 17, 18) cannot be understood unless this is borne in mind—especially those in which He speaks of Himself as the only way to God (vi. 53, x. 8, 9, xiv. 6, etc.) ; which passages, in the light of such sayings as i. 9, and vi. 45, cannot possibly be supposed to limit the knowledge of God to those who have "known Christ after the flesh." As in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus often calls Himself the "Son of Man" ; but the term always carries with it, even more than in the other Gospels, the thought of His Divine dignity and life-giving mission (i. 51, iii. 14, v. 27, vi. 27, 53, 62, viii. 28, xii. 23, 34, xiii. 31, etc.). He welcomes, though He does not fully trust, the nascent faith of those who are impressed by His "signs" or miracles (ii. 23—iii. 2), or who recognise in Him a "prophet" (vi. 14, iv. 19), or even the Messiah, the "King of Israel" (i. 49, iv. 29) ; but always He tries to deepen and develop this half-formed belief into a truer understanding and acceptance of His Divine Sonship (vi. 29, 40, 51, 69, xi. 25-27 ; and compare ix. 17 with ix. 35-38. See also xx. 31, and compare 1 John v. 20).

Real Humanity of Jesus.—It is so easy to be impressed with the Divine claims which are here made by Jesus as to lose sight of the other side—the fact that He is represented as compassed with real human limitations. Yet the true humanity of Jesus is just as much a part of the author's Gospel as his Divine dignity (compare 1 John i. 1-4 and iv. 2). The present writer dealt with this subject in *The*

* See Inge in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, 'The Theology of the Fourth Gospel,' p. 278. Also Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the early Roman Empire*, pp. 144, 156, 157.

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British Friend for May, 1909, in an article from which this passage may be quoted :—

“ Not only in that story [of the woman of Samaria] does Jesus feel weariness and thirst ; on the Cross also He is thirsty (xix. 28) ; by the grave of Lazarus He weeps (xi. 35) and ‘ groans in Himself ’ in the intensity of His human agitation (xi. 33, 38) ;* He prays to God to be delivered from the hour of darkness which is coming upon Him, and which ‘ troubles ’ His soul (xii. 27) ; He speaks of Himself simply as ‘ a man ’ (viii. 40), and allows people to talk of His father and mother (vi. 42) ; He fears to be taken for a revolutionary leader (vi. 15) ; He has His ‘ brethren ’ (vii. 3, etc.), and His special friends (xi. 5, xiii. 23, etc.) ; He shows solicitude for His mother when on the Cross (xix. 25). These are among many indications that should surely give us pause before we conclude that from this Gospel ‘ the human Jesus has entirely disappeared.’ ”

Further, there is no writing in the New Testament where the complete subordination of Jesus to His Father and His entire dependence is more explicitly stated than here. “ The Father is greater than I ” (xiv. 28) ; “ The Son can do nothing of himself ” (v. 19, 30 ; compare also vi. 38, vii. 16-18, 28, 29, viii. 28, 50, etc.) And His complete humility is touchingly shown in the story (xiii. 1-20) of washing the disciples’ feet, which is a genuinely human act. The real greatness of the Fourth Gospel comes out when we compare it with the puerile stories of the Apocryphal Gospels, where Jesus is continually manifesting His Divine power by sensational and unnecessary miracles. The author has achieved the greater miracle (on the hypothesis that he is romancing) of depicting, in a luminous and consistent portrait, the eternal Son of God expressing Himself in a genuinely human and lovable character. It is “ begging the question ” to assert, as many do, that the two things *cannot* be brought together without artifice and strain. Both elements are certainly present, and there is no evidence

* The present writer alluded (in *Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus*, Part I., ch. ix.) to the intense agitation displayed by Jesus before the raising of Lazarus as an unstudied indication that He had difficulty in being sure that it was God’s will that He should attempt so great a work ; and it is interesting to note a confirmation of this view by an able writer in the *Cambridge Biblical Essays* (“ The Historical Value of the Fourth Gospel,” by A. E. Brooke), pp. 312-316.

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that either is artificially “ dragged in ” to support the theory. To the present writer, this is the strongest possible indication that this Gospel is founded on a basis of remembered fact. “ St. John is not dramatizing a metaphysical abstraction, but idealising (showing the highest significance of) a historical figure ” (Inge). What this points to, as to the relations between the Divine and the human, which the author must have held, we may enquire later.

The real humanity of Jesus was clearly an essential part of the author’s message. Paul, as we have seen, though he certainly held it, never dwells upon the deeds or words of Jesus.* Before the end of the first century, absorption in the eternal and glorified Christ was carried to an extreme by the Gnostics and other “ Docetists,” who, in the interests of an ultra-spiritual theory, denied that Christ ever became a real man at all. His humanity they regarded as an appearance or phantom only. This the author, or whoever wrote the First Epistle, denounces as “ the spirit of antichrist ” (1 John iv. 1-3, 2 John 7). The most conspicuous “ heresy ” in the Christian Church was the denial not of the Divinity of Jesus, but of His humanity.

Further, these Gnostic speculations, which (as we have seen in considering *Colossians*),† interposed a hierarchy of semi-divine agencies between God and man, are definitely put aside by the author just as by Paul. But he goes further. He makes no allusion whatever to the angelic powers that were so real to his people ; and even the “ demons ” of the Synoptists find no place. There is for him *one* power of Evil, “ the prince of this world ” (xiv. 30, etc.). The doctrine of Christ as the incarnate Logos does away with the need for intermediaries ; for the Logos is not only “ with God ” (i. 1), He *is* God.‡ “ In the Fourth Gospel,” says Dr. W. N. Clarke (*Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 45), “ the Logos is not an intermediary, but a mode or

* See above, p. 34.

† See above, p. 40.

‡ Θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος (i. 1). The author does not say ὁ Θεός, preserving a distinction which cannot be expressed in English. “ The Evangelist reserves the designation ὁ Θεός for the Father—the source of divinity ; while Θεός without the article is used to denote the category of the divine nature or essence which the son shares with the Father ” (Johnston, *Philosophy of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 26).

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manifestation of God Himself. God Himself is in touch with His world." There is no need of "emanations" from God to bring the Unspeakable near to men. Christ has the "fulness" in Himself (i. 16), and has brought it in abounding measure ("grace upon grace") to His followers.

Spirituality of these writings.—The crude Messianic dreams, which the Jews of the day had inherited from the prophets and apocalyptists, are altogether transcended by the author. He does not, indeed, like Marcion, depreciate the Old Testament; he has a profound reverence for Moses and the prophets (v. 46, 47, vi. 45, etc.). He certainly regards Jesus as fulfilling the prophecies of the Messiah; but in a far deeper sense than the Jews imagined (xii. 37-41, xix. 31-37, etc.). Christ is for him a *universal* Revealer of God and Saviour (iii. 14-17). He is also the Judge of men; but (except in v. 28-29) the Judgment is not a future event but a present reality. "This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world," separating the evil from the good (iii. 19-21). Only in the Appendix (xxi. 22), possibly added by a different writer, is there any allusion to a future "coming." Elsewhere the Parousia is not an apocalyptic advent in the clouds of heaven (as in Mark), but the return of Jesus as the Holy Spirit to the souls of His disciples (xiv. 16-19). Jesus Himself is to be not only the Bread from heaven to nourish their souls (vi. 48-51); not only is He to give them the water of life (vii. 37-39); He is to be in them as the sap of the Vine is in the branches, His own life manifesting itself in their lives (xv. 1-6).

It is in the fulfilment of such promises, in the experience of humble souls, that the acknowledgment of the Divine nature of Christ finds its root and its justification. It is no speculative theory, no mythological superstructure upon the simple humanity of the earlier Gospels. "To sustain a relation of vital, inner unity with, and suffusion of, human souls is manifestly beyond the power of any lower than God himself; and this is really the basal argument for the Deity of Christ which we can see to be implicit in the New Testament as a whole" (H. R. Mackintosh).

CHAPTER IX

THE GOSPEL AND EPISTLES OF JOHN (*Continued*)

Having indicated in broad outlines the main features of the Johannine Christology, it remains to treat it in somewhat greater detail.

The Prologue to the Gospel (i. 1-18).^{*}—The author begins with the same words as the Creation story in Genesis, which is probably in his mind throughout (see v. 5, “the darkness”). The Logos *was* from all eternity. This eternal existence is in his thoughts whenever the pre-existence of Christ is mentioned, as in viii. 58, xvii. 5, 24. The Logos was “with God”; implying, in conjunction with the next clause “and was God,”[†] a higher unity that allows of an inner differentiation, and so of relationship and communion.

“All things came into being through him”—not merely in the mass but individually. The Logos is the Divine agent in Creation (compare Psalm xxxiii. 6, 1 Cor. viii. 6, Col. i. 16, Heb. i. 2). “In him was life:” He is the source of all life, physical as well as spiritual—“the driving force of the universe.” But not a *blind* force; “the life was the *light of men*”; the Logos in man makes him a rational, self-conscious being, and unites him to the Reason that is manifested in the Cosmos. The nature of Light is to diffuse and communicate itself, and this it does ceaselessly (*φαίνει*, 5), but it meets a power that resists it:

^{*} For the exposition that follows the writer is much indebted to Johnston, *Philosophy of the Fourth Gospel* (pages 18-48), which in turn is largely based on Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John* (Murray, 1908).

[†] See above, p. 57. This “higher unity allowing of inner differentiation” is, of course, declared by many to be unthinkable. What we have now to do is, however, to try to analyse the author’s thoughts; any attempt to weigh them critically must be deferred.

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sin, ignorance, "darkness." Yet the darkness does not "overwhelm" it (this is a probable meaning of *κατέλαβεν* in *v.* 5, the verb which in *xii.* 35 is translated "overtake").* From time to time the light sends forth flashes through the darkness, partial and transitory, in the lives of holy men and prophets, like John the Baptist: "prophetic voices have reinforced the light of the human soul," and been like heralds of the dawn. "The true light which lighteth every individual man" (*v.* 9) was there all the time; but it was also "coming into the world" in clearer fashion, to gather up and concentrate in one full beam the "broken lights." (Note how the author is leading up to his great and central assertion that "the Logos became flesh.")

"He was in the world" (the masculine pronoun shows that the mind of the author has now reverted from Light, which in Greek is neuter, to Logos)—but the world did not recognise Him.† "He came to His own possessions (not once only but often), and they that were His own received Him not." The few that did receive Him were given "the right to become sons of God," with a birth not physical but spiritual (*vv.* 12, 13).

And now comes that to which the author has been leading up. "*The Logos became flesh*, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory." The word "became" (*ἐγένετο*) is the same as in *v.* 3, "all things came into being." The fulfilment of the same Divine purpose of love, which began in Creation, issued in Incarnation. The exact meaning of "flesh" has been much discussed; it cannot be precisely the same as in Paul (Rom. viii. 1-9) where the "flesh" is "sinful." It means apparently our full humanity, with its limitations and mortality—not body only, but human nature as it is, apart from sin. "We beheld His glory"; the author's theology really starts here—not in speculations about the Logos, but in personal experience of a Character that was

* Compare George Fox: "I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. In that also I saw the infinite love of God" (*Journal*, vol. I., p. 19).

† Compare the great saying of Heraclitus, one of the earliest Greek philosophers, who also taught at Ephesus: "This Logos existeth from all time, yet mankind are unaware of it, both before they hear it and while they listen to it."

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“ full of grace and truth.” These words “ grace ” and “ truth ” are, like many more in the New Testament, old terms raised to a new power : “ grace ” implies love and beauty of character, with power to propagate itself in other lives ; “ truth ” suggests reality and absolute genuineness. These new revelations of God “ came by Jesus Christ ” ; henceforth throughout the Gospel the personal name takes the place of the Logos who was incarnated in Him.

The whole of the Prologue is summarised in *v.* 18. “ No man hath seen God at any time ” ; the author yields to no philosopher in his conviction that the Divine nature in its fulness is beyond all sense-experience, and beyond even “ our benumbed conceiving ” (compare 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). But that which the mind of man is powerless to discover has been “ declared ” (or “ interpreted ”) by a Son—the “ only-begotten Son, who is ever near to the Father’s heart.” The word “ declared ” (*ἐξηγήσατο*) would be familiar to Greeks, who used it of the interpretation of the Divine mysteries to initiates. It is because Christ is the perfect Son that He is able thus to reveal God as Father. “ God, in Himself, is invisible and inscrutable ; but the Only-begotten, appearing in space and time, under the conditions of human life, and yet still in the bosom of the Father, never abandoning that eternal relationship, . . . He declares God ” (Johnston). The author “ translated Logos by Son, and in doing so he did two things : revolutionised the conception of God, and changed an abstract and purely metaphysical idea [Logos] into a concrete and intensely ethical person ” (Fairbairn).

The Prologue to the First Epistle (1 John i. 1-4). This brief prologue adds little in the way of Christology to that which has been stated in the Gospel, but it moves entirely in the same sphere of thought. It is not at all certain whether “ the Word (or word) of life ” means the Logos or the *message* of life brought by Jesus Christ (compare “ word of God ” in John x. 35). In either case the emphasis is upon the *life* that was “ with the Father ” and was “ manifested ” in the human personality of Jesus ; which personality the author emphatically claims, as in John i. 14, that he himself had known at first hand. His

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purpose here is practical and ethical rather than doctrinal ; hence he dwells not so much on the Person of Christ as on its life-giving influences ; he “ reports ” *concerning* the life (v. 1) rather than announcing (as in the Gospel) the Life itself. In the words that follow (i. 5—ii. 11) “ Light ” takes the place of “ Life ”—in exact harmony with the thought in John i. 4, “ in the Logos was life, and the life was the light of men.”

How Christ “ interprets ” the Father.—In both Gospel and Epistle the Divine nature, which itself is unsearchable (John i. 18 and 1 John iv. 12), is adumbrated by such figures as Life, Light, Love : all of which are essentially not self-contained but self-communicating. The agent of this self-communication is Christ—first, subjectively, as the eternal immanent Logos, and then objectively, as incarnated in Jesus. He is the bringer of *Life* to men (John v. 26, xvii. 2 ; 1 John v. 11, 12). He is the *Light* of the world (viii. 12), not of one nation only, or of prophet souls exclusively, but of all humanity. And, most of all, He exhibits the Divine *Love* (xvii. 26)—by His incarnation (John iii. 16, xvi. 27, xvii. 23 ; 1 John iv. 9), by His selfless character (xiii. 1) and supremely by His death for men (x. 14, xv. 13, xvii. 19 ; 1 John iii. 16, iv. 8-14). This Love of God, as all the above passages show, is not thought of as something sublimated, incomprehensible, to which we can attach no clear meaning. If, as Paul says, it is “ knowledge-overpassing ” (Eph. iii. 19), it is yet *what we mean* by love : it is devotion, self-sacrifice. “ God so loved the world that He *gave*.” For the author the Incarnation and the Cross are of supreme moment because they are not merely the highest exhibition of *human* love and devotion, but the truest manifestation of the very heart of God Himself. This thought is nowhere in the New Testament so explicitly emphasised as it is in these Johannine writings ; and it is clear that the author’s Christology is vital to it. It is all bound up in his central assertion that “ the Word became flesh.”

How this revelation of God becomes Salvation.—Our subject is Christology rather than Soteriology, yet the Johannine writings can hardly be left without an indication of their profound ethical purpose. The author’s Jewish

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cast of mind is seen in his avoidance of the abstract philosophic terms, such as "faith" and "knowledge," to which the Gnostic Christians around him were devoted. Instead of these he uses the concrete verbs, "believing" and "knowing." The Life which Christ brings from God does not operate on us by pure miracle. It is no magical change wrought without our co-operation. Though in one passage (John iii. 3-8) its coming is compared to a *birth* (with which the will of the individual is not concerned), elsewhere that will must be awake, active, receptive. Even here (iii. 15) it is explained that it is "whosoever *believeth*" who receives the eternal life. This opening of the soul to receive the life which Christ communicates is insisted on in differing terms: "believing" (vi. 29), "obeying" (iii. 36 R.V.), "knowing" (x. 14, xvii. 3), "beholding" (vi. 40), "seeing" (xiv. 9), "hearing" (viii. 43, x. 16), "coming" (vi. 45), "having" (1 John v. 12). Everywhere human *freewill* is taken for granted; only as the will of man puts itself into line with the will of God can His life-giving purpose be effected.

And the evidence that this purpose is being effected will be the reproduction in man of the *Love* that God is. The "Life" is not magical but ethical. "We know that we have passed out of death into life *because we love*" (1 John iii. 14): because a new experience of love, and a new capacity for love, has arisen within us. (So also John xiii. 35, 1 John iii. 15-19, iv. 7, 11-13, 20). This love is not something different from human love (iii. 17, 18); it is human love raised to a new power by the manifestation of the infinite love of God in Christ (iv. 10, 11, 19). "We love, because He first loved us."

This is what, for the author of these wonderful writings, constitutes a Christian: not any purely intellectual belief or knowledge, not any magical transformation; but such an inward reception of the "grace and truth" that "came by Jesus Christ" as changes our whole inward nature, replacing selfishness by love, and enlarging our capacity till our poor lives become the vehicle and the manifestation of the very life of God.

CHAPTER X

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

[The volume "Revelation" of the *Century Bible*, by Prof. C. Anderson Scott, is very useful, especially as a Commentary. Some of the editor's conservative views of authorship, etc., can, in the present writer's opinion, hardly be maintained.]

Nature of the Book.—Many modern readers, after they pass the third chapter of this extraordinary book, find themselves in such a maze of fantastic imagery that, being quite bewildered, they despair of discovering anything that they can understand or profit by, and abandon the attempt. Much light has, however, been thrown upon the nature of the book by the discovery that it is only one of a large number of Jewish and Jewish-Christian "Apocalypses," all of which are akin in their general character and purpose. One of the early apocalyptic writings is the Book of Daniel, which became exceedingly popular, and on which to a large extent the others are modelled. Parts of Ezekiel and Zechariah are still earlier examples. Some of the chief of these writings are the *Book of Enoch* (most of which dates from the first century B.C.), the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Assumption of Moses* (which, it is believed, is quoted in Jude ix.), *Fourth Esdras* (which is in the Apocrypha under the title "Second Esdras," and was written about A.D. 70), the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, and the *Sibylline Oracles*. (See article "Apocalyptic Literature" in Hastings' one volume *Dictionary of the Bible*.)*

* "From the time of this book (Daniel) until the end of the first century A.D., and indeed even later, we find a continuous stream of apocalypses, each marked by a strange combination of pessimism as to the present, and hope as to the future yet to be miraculously established. . . . The authors of the various works are utterly unknown. In this, as in other respects, the apocalypses constitute a unique national literature."

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The general purpose of this literature was to encourage the people of God to faithfulness in times of trouble and persecution and despondency, by picturing in allegorical form the powers of evil that were arrayed against them, and the miraculous intervention by which God was about to deliver them. "Apocalypse" agrees with "Prophecy" in depicting a coming "Day of the Lord" when the wicked shall be overthrown, but differs from it in the pessimism which sees no hope in the world-order of events, and takes refuge in the anticipation of a great cataclysm by which "a new heaven and a new earth" shall be set up. This great deliverance is expected to be wrought through the agency of the Messiah, whose figure therefore bulks largely in most of the apocalyptic writings. It is, no doubt, to the influence of such of them as were pre-Christian, that the form taken by the Messianic ideas of our Lord's contemporaries was largely due.* Other characteristics common to all this class of writings are visions, the introduction of angelic and demonic beings, and the use of strange allegorical figures, half-animal, half-human. This method of depicting present woes and coming deliverance was quite familiar among the Jews of that period, and would be well understood by them. The enemies of God who are depicted under these strange forms in the Book of Revelation are clearly the world-power of Rome, as represented in the Emperors, who had begun to claim the honours of divine worship and to demand this as a test of loyalty. The author's purpose was to encourage his fellow believers to be faithful in their allegiance to Christ, in face of the terrible dangers entailed by refusal to worship the Emperor (see C. A. Scott, *Century Bible*, pp. 64, 65).

There are pretty clear signs that, in certain sections, he has worked-in earlier and purely Jewish apocalypses. One of these is ch. vii. 1-8, which is immediately followed by a beautiful and well-known passage, in which the narrow expectations of the Jewish apocalypticist are suddenly swallowed up in the "larger hope" that Christ has brought to men. "The whole might be described as a supreme illustration of the difference that Christ has made" (C. A. Scott, pp. 188-194).

* See *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, by E. F. Scott, D.D. (T. & T. Clark), chapter on "The Messianic Hope."

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Date and Authorship.—A very early tradition represents "the Apocalypse" to have been written by John the son of Zebedee about the close of the reign of Domitian, i.e., 96 A.D. Certain indications in the book itself point to the reign of Nero, about 68 A.D., and parts of it may have been written about that time; but there is general agreement now that the later date best fits the book in its present form. It is, however, extremely difficult to believe that the author had anything to do with the Gospel and Epistles attributed to John. The evidences adduced by C. A. Scott in the *Century Bible* (pp. 45-47) seem to prove nothing more than that they all emanated from a common or "Johannine" school of Christian thought.*

Not only is the language of this book entirely different from that of the Fourth Gospel—being, in fact, a Greek of the writer's own, and largely ungrammatical—but the range of ideas is quite distinct. The author "claims no apostolic authority (note Rev. xxi. 14), nor is there any evidence that he had been an eye-witness of Jesus on earth." (Moffatt).

"One may wisely hesitate to define the area of the impossible, but it is surely in the highest degree unlikely . . . that one who had sat at the feet of Jesus could put forth a work in which the great teachings of the divine Fatherhood, the universal brotherhood, the spiritual Kingdom, scarcely appear, but in their place we hear hoarse cries for the day of vengeance, and see the warrior Christ coming to deluge the earth with blood."†

All the positive information afforded by the book itself is that the author claims that his name was John, and that he was banished to the isle of Patmos for "the testimony of Jesus"; and that he writes in a tone of great authority to the churches of Asia Minor.

Christology.—Passing to our real subject, the author's thoughts concerning Christ are certainly more advanced, in

* The most striking common elements are to be found in the name "Lamb," constantly here applied to Christ (*cf.* John i. 29, 36), and the fact that He is once called "The Word of God" (Rev. xix. 13). But the word for "Lamb" is different in the two cases; and the phrase "The Word of God" as a whole is nowhere applied to Christ in the Gospel or Epistles of John.

† Forbes, quoted by Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, p. 511.

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the direction of Divinity, than those of any other New Testament writer. From this point of view, the book finds its fitting place at the close of our Bible. What cannot be truly said of Paul's Epistles, or of the Fourth Gospel, might almost be said of the Book of Revelation, that "from it the human Jesus has disappeared." The only remnants are to be found in the frequent use of the bare name "Jesus"; in the description of Him as "of the tribe of Judah" and of the house of David (Rev. v. 5, xxii. 16); in the mention of His crucifixion at Jerusalem (i. 7, xi. 8) and His resurrection (i. 5, 18, ii. 8, etc.) On the whole, the Christ of this book is everywhere a glorified and superhuman figure, more so even than "that Son of Man" of the Book of Enoch. But He is distinguished from the Messiah of "Enoch" or any other purely Jewish writing in the fact that His *death* for the sins of men is constantly kept in view—as may be noted in the use throughout of the term "Lamb," doubtless in its paschal sense,* and in frequent specific allusions (i. 5b, v. 6, 9, 12, vii. 14, xii. 11, xiii. 8, etc.). The thought of the humiliation and sacrificial death of the Messiah as the condition of His exaltation in glory is specifically Christian. "It is in virtue of His death as a sacrifice for sin that Christ is now reigning in glory" (Adeney, *New Testament Doctrine of Christ*, p. 165.)

The most noteworthy feature of the author's descriptions of the glorified Christ is that the marks which distinguish Him are those which earlier writers, and sometimes the author himself, have applied to God. "I am the Alpha and the Omega" is uttered by God in i. 8 and xxi. 6, but by Christ in xxii. 13.† In i. 13, "One like unto a son of man," is doubtless reminiscent of Dan. vii. 13, which was taken to refer to the Messiah; but "his head and his hair were white as wool" (i. 14) is in Dan. vii. 9 applied to "The Ancient of Days" Himself. Frequently "God and the Lamb" are represented as seated on one throne (iii. 21, xxii. 1), and are worshipped together (v. 13). Christ is "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (xix. 16).

* Compare 1 Cor. v. 7, "for our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ," The "Lamb" in Revelation is not, as in Is. liii. 7, a figure of submissiveness; the "Lamb" is also the "Lion" (Rev. v. 5, 6, vi. 16, etc.)

† Also (virtually) in i. 17, "I am the first and the last."

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Yet even here there is always a distinction made—Christ is still in some sense subordinate to His Father (ii. 27, iii. 5, 21) ; He is the “ Son of God ” (ii. 18) ; and speaks of the Father as “ my God ” (iii. 12) ; “ The Kingdom of the world is [to] become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ ” (xi. 15). Christ is the “ Word of God ” (xix. 13), “ the beginning of the creation of God ” (iii. 14)—which means, probably, not the first created being, but the source and agent of all creation, both outward and inward (*cf.* Col. i. 15-17). He is also the Spirit of God, in so far that what He orders to be written is “ what the Spirit saith to the churches ” (ii. 29 and iii.)

In considering what this author does with Christ, it should be remembered that he writes as a Jew of the Jews, saturated with the literature and the ideas of his people, to whom “ Monotheism had become a passion, and the ascription of Divine honour to any other than God a horror and a blasphemy. John nevertheless sets Jesus side by side with the Almighty. One meaning of this phenomenon is plain. It is the most convincing proof of the impression made by Jesus upon His disciples, one which had been sufficient to revolutionise their most cherished religious belief ; for them He had the value of God ” (C. A. Scott, p. 72).

We may note, in closing, one phrase thrown out by the author which, if the usual translation correctly represents his meaning, is unique in the New Testament : “ The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ” (xiii. 8).^{*} We may compare passages like Acts ii. 23, 1 Peter i. 19, 20, where the death of Christ is spoken of as predetermined in the counsels of God ; but nowhere else do we find expressed, as here, the thought of Atonement as centred in the very being and character of the Eternal. And that, which was always latent, as it were, in the outflowing of the love of God to His creatures, reaches its objective manifestation in the death of Christ. This thought of an eternal atonement finding its culmination in a historic act is in full harmony with the “ mystical evangelicalism ” of the Fourth

^{*} Comparing the passage with xvii. 8, we must admit the possibility that the meaning is “ whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain.”

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Gospel, where the revelation of the " Word made flesh " is in no way weakened by the assurance that that Word has always been the Life and the Light of men.

It is to be hoped that the fantastic and often uncouth form in which great thoughts are presented in this wonderful book will not prevent us from endeavouring to read it with understanding hearts.

" If properly interpreted, the Book of Revelation is of really profound religious value. It cannot serve as a basis of theology, but, like any piece of imaginative writing, will serve to stir the emotion and the faith of the Christian. . . . Stript of its apocalyptic figures, the book presents a noble ideal of Christian character, an assurance of the unfailing justice of God, and a prophecy of the victory of Christianity over a brutal social order."*

* Shailer Mathews, in Hastings' one volume *Dictionary of the Bible*

CHAPTER XI

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

Summary. Three main stages in the thought-development of the New Testament writers have now claimed our attention :

- (i.) That of the Synoptic Gospels and the early speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, with which we may also join the Epistle of James.
- (ii.) That of the Pauline writings, with which we may connect the First Epistle of Peter and the Epistle to the Hebrews.
- (iii.) That of the Johannine Group of writings : the Gospel and the Epistles attributed to John, and the Book of Revelation.

(i.) In the first group the real humanity of Jesus is taken for granted, as too obvious to need emphasis. He is presented in the Synoptic Gospels as One who shares with men to the full their sense of limitation and weakness and entire dependence on God (Mark x. 18), who is completely identified with those He has come to save and help (Matt. xxv. 40) ; and who at the same time feels that He is identified with God (Mark ix. 37*b*). He lives in the consciousness of perfect sonship with the Father, by which He becomes the Revealer of God to men (Luke x. 21, 22), and their spiritual Ruler and Judge (Matt. vii. 22, 23). He feels that He is fulfilling His people's expectation of a Messiah or Deliverer, but in a spiritual, not an outward, sense ; and this thought of a spiritual Messiah, who reaches exaltation through lowliness and suffering, He hints at by calling Himself " the Son of Man." The circumstances preceding and accompanying His death are recorded with great fulness ; and, though the accounts of His resurrection are fragmentary and even contradictory, the various narratives agree as to His re-appearance after death and enough is told us to account for the revival of faith in the hearts of His followers.

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In the early preaching in the Acts He is described as "a man approved of God by mighty works and wonders and signs" (Acts ii. 22); one "whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (x. 38). The speakers appeal to the fact of His resurrection as the proof that, though crucified, God had made Him "both Lord and Messiah" (ii. 22-36); and they solve the contradiction contained in the idea of a crucified Messiah by finding a Messianic prophecy in the suffering Servant of Isaiah liii, etc. It is probably the influence of these prophecies, together with hints dropped by Jesus Himself, that leads them to connect His sufferings with the assurance of forgiveness and the new life of reconciliation with God (Acts iii. 18, 19), though they never develop the thought of His death as a sacrifice.

The addresses attributed to Paul in the later chapters of Acts go very little further in Christology than these earlier ones by Peter and others.

(ii.) Turning to the Pauline and other similar writings, we noted how in Paul's earliest letters, those to the Thessalonians, his mind is full of the expected early return of Jesus Christ in apocalyptic glory—a conception which hardly appears in his later and more important writings. In 1 Peter we have many allusions to the sufferings of Christ, mainly as an encouragement to patience and fortitude, but also to the efficacy of His death as redeeming men from their "vain manner of life" (i. 18, 19). It is here also we find what is perhaps the earliest hint of the thought of Christ's pre-existence (i. 10, 11), which carries with it, implicitly, that of the Incarnation. This idea is hardly mentioned in Paul's great letters to the Galatians and Romans, where his thoughts seem to have centred mainly on the "mystical union" whereby Christ is so identified with the believer that His death and resurrection are re-enacted in the soul's experience (Gal. ii. 20, Rom. vi. 1-14); but it appears in Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 4, 2 Cor. viii. 9), the latter passage being probably the first clear statement of the idea of an Incarnation.

In Corinthians also we find what is probably the first instance of the use of the Logos doctrine* to explain the

* Or, more probably, of the earlier "Wisdom" doctrine (see p. 52).

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nature of the pre-existent Christ (1 Cor. viii. 6, "through whom are all things," and 2 Cor. iv. 4, "the image of God"). In Colossians this thought is further developed (i. 13-20), and in Philippians there is added to it that of the "self-emptying" of Christ in the Incarnation and the Cross (ii. 5-11), which is brought in as a powerful appeal for humility and love to others.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the real humanity of Jesus is strongly emphasised, while the writer shows the influence of the Wisdom literature in the terms he uses of the pre-existent and exalted Christ, whom however he (or she) calls "Son" and not "Logos." The "self-emptying" involved in the Incarnation and the Cross is clearly brought out in ii. 14-18, and the sacrificial character of Christ's death is strongly emphasised; yet its purpose is always presented as inward and ethical, not outward and "forensic."

(iii.) Passing to our third group, the Johannine writings, we noted that here for the first time the pre-existent Christ is explicitly called the Logos, who, while eternally "with God," and even Himself God (*Θεός* not *ὁ Θεός*), has ever been at the same time the "life" and the "light" of men. The main purpose of the writer was to set forth Jesus as a real man of flesh and blood, who is this eternal Logos or "Son" (xx. 31) incarnate; and thereby to counter the "Docetism" of Gnostic and other thinkers who were representing His humanity as a mere appearance. While the writer was certainly a Jew, and regarded Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, his doctrine of the Incarnate Logos was intended to commend his Gospel to Greek minds, and it succeeded. It marks the final separation of Christianity from Jewish narrowness, and the launching of it as a world religion. Christ is the "light that lighteth *every man* coming into the world:" the diffused light that lights all men has been focussed in Him into one clear beam; and those who "receive" this fuller light and "walk in" it know in their own souls the "mystical union" of which Paul had spoken—a union which is suggested by such figures as the "Bread" and the "Vine." Christ has "declared" (or "interpreted," i. 18), in a perfect and self-sacrificing human life, the Love that God

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essentially is, in order that this Love may be reproduced in those who by faith come into a right relation to Himself. That is the central thought of the First Epistle, but it is also present throughout the Gospel.

We must not omit to remind ourselves that, while the New Testament writers' thoughts of Christ gradually rise to heights like these, they always regard Him as subordinate to the Father.

The Divine and the Human in Christ.—In Part II of this book we shall be dealing with the theories as to the nature of Christ which were built up by later Greek thinkers upon these New Testament writings; but, in view of the deep influence those theories have had upon Christian theology, even down to our time, it seems needful to investigate here a little further how the early writers regarded the union of the Divine and the human in Christ.

Our study has shown us a development of thought about Him even in the New Testament, but a development that seems to have been entirely harmonious and consistent with itself. There are no traces of Christological *controversy* in the New Testament. The higher thoughts of Christ struck out by Paul, by the author of Hebrews, and by "John," do not appear to have shocked in any way the earlier disciples who had lived and walked with Jesus,—though we must remember that to them, as Jews, a strict monotheism was the first article of their faith. The First Epistle of Peter, if, as seems probable, Peter himself stands behind it, is evidence that the first disciples accepted Paul's doctrine of Christ—though probably it went beyond what they had yet conceived of Him, and though some of them doubtless found his mysticism "hard to understand" (2 Peter iii. 15, 16).

It follows, then, that they cannot have regarded the "Divinity" of Christ, to which they were led up, as the contradiction of His real humanity. Nor is there any trace, even in the Fourth Gospel, of any theory of a "double nature" in Him. The writers cannot possibly have thought of Him as partly Divine and partly human—as having two layers of consciousness, so to say, one super-imposed upon the other, so that He knew things as God which He did not know as man, and so forth. They began, no doubt, to think of Him as a human being who had risen into Divinity.

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They came afterwards to think of Him as a Divine being who had descended into humanity. But it is clear they did not think that in becoming human He had ceased to be Divine. They held fast to His real humanity (while in the flesh), but they never thought of this as inconsistent with the Divine nature they had come to attribute to Him. It is clear, therefore, that they must have held that the Divine and the human could be united in a perfect human life: that such a life, without any confusion or contradiction, such as is involved in the idea of a double "nature," could express at once perfect humanity and real Divinity. This means that they must have held—in so far as they thought the matter out—that God and man have *something in common*: that God has in Him something that can be adequately expressed in a perfect human life, and that man at his best has in him that which can adequately show forth the Divine nature.

Now, it was, surely, this element of community between God and man for which they found an expression in the current philosophic term "Logos." That term represented, as we have seen, the best of the many efforts made by philosophic thought to bring God and man together—to find a way by which the Infinite and the finite could come into relations. But the effort largely failed until it was seen that, for once, God and man *had* come together: that "the Logos had become flesh," and embodied itself as a perfect human life. Christ then became to them a revelation at once of the human side of God and of the Divine side of man. They saw in Him the manifestation of the *self-limited* aspect of the Divine nature—an element which God must have in Him if He is to come into real relations with His finite creatures. They found this self-limitation of the Infinite in the work of Creation, and in the age-long process of Revelation;* and it was in the Incarnation and the Cross that the same inherent element in the Divine nature had now found its highest and complete manifestation. In other words, Jesus Christ had revealed to them

* It must be remembered that whenever they speak of Christ as the agent of Creation (1 Cor. viii. 6, Col. i. 16, Heb. i. 2, John i. 3), or as the perennial Light of men and the only way to God (John i. 4 xiv. 6, etc.), it is Christ as the eternal Logos, or "Wisdom," and not merely as incarnate that they have in mind.

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that God was essentially self-sacrificing Love ; and this same Love they saw had been manifested not only (though supremely) in the work of Redemption, but in Revelation and even in Creation.

Their assertion, then, of the " Deity " or " eternal Sonship " of Christ was the assertion that, by His incarnation, His character, and His death, He really exhibited to men, as none other did, the true nature of God.

And surely their teaching is as true for us as it was for them. We live in an age of doubt and perplexity, when many of the ultimate problems that puzzled the Greek thinkers have begun to haunt the minds of men once more. Science and philosophy teach us of a God who is immanent and infinite, who works by law and not by particular volitions, who may be working out good for the race, but who does not seem to care for us individually, or to heed us when we pray. Faith, on the other hand, bids us cling to a God who is transcendent and personal, who comes into direct relations with us, and cares for us as individuals. Well, it was the Logos idea, especially when this was developed into the thought of the Logos incarnate in Christ, that enabled philosophic Greeks like Justin Martyr to find a God who could satisfy both faith and reason. The Logos had always been immanent, as the thought and revealing Word of God ; but it was now seen to be personal too. Christ revealed the personality and transcendence of God, and yet left Him immanent in sun and rain and flowers, and also in the soul of man. He did not belittle the Infinite Father by making Him a finite being, separated from His world and from His creatures. God was in them and yet above them : He had never left His world to go on of itself ; He remained the Infinite Source of all its life, but had been always limiting Himself for the sake of His children, because His inmost nature was not infinity but Love.

The Logos Christology, then, so the present writer at least believes, has (in its essential meaning) an undying worth. It gives free play to both faith and reason, and saves for us at once the transcendence and the immanence of God.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRINITARIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD

[See Peake, *Christianity, its Nature and its Truth*, chap. vi., "The Trinity in Unity." There is also a valuable section on this subject in *The Christian Doctrine of God*, by Dr. W. N. Clarke.]

The New Testament doctrine of the Person of Christ was part of the enriched conception of God into which He had raised His followers ; and, if we are to see it in its right bearings and proportions, it is needful, before our study closes, to look at this larger subject.

Certain *data* must always be borne in mind if we are to find a true answer to the question, What did the New Testament writers think of God ?

(i.) In the first place, their thought of God was always *experimental* and not metaphysical—*religious* and not merely theological. Not one of them ever set to work to think out the nature of God as He might be supposed to be in Himself and out of relation to human experience. They recognised that this was beyond human knowledge (John 18, vi. 46 ; 1 Tim. vi. 16 ; 1 John iv. 12). All they tried to do was to explain, as well as they could, a threefold fact of their experience : (a) that Jesus had lived a life full of " grace " and love ; (b) that He had lifted them up into a knowledge of God as their Father and Saviour, of such richness and power as they had never dreamed of ; (c) that He had not left them, but was still with them, reproducing His own life in their regenerate souls.

(ii.) Secondly, they always, as we have seen, regarded Christ the Revealer as in some real sense subordinate to the Father whom He revealed to them.

(iii.) They never for one moment abandoned the strict Monotheism in which, as Jews, they had been trained.*

* The classical passage in this connection is 1 Cor. viii. 4-6, which shows sign of having been very carefully written. Paul, contrasting Christianity with pagan polytheism, says there is only one God, the Father, the source and goal of all things ; and one Lord, Jesus Christ,

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There is no single hint of Tritheism in their writings, as there must have been had they thought of God as "Three Persons" in our modern sense of the word "person." God for them is One, and never more than One.

The Basis of Trinitarian Thought.—But, as soon as the New Testament writers had confessed the Deity of Jesus Christ, they perceived that the Divine nature was too rich to be adequately suggested (no words can ever do *more* than "suggest" it) by the category of bare, formal unity. The unity of God, which they never thought of abandoning, must include some kind of complexity: there must be different ways of conceiving God, different modes in which He must be thought of as coming into relation with men. Such a difference is suggested in John i. 1, in the distinction the writer makes between *ὁ Θεός*, with whom the Logos was, and *Θεός*, which the Logos *was*; and we find it again in 1 Cor. viii. 4-6 (just alluded to in a footnote,) where the "Lord" Jesus Christ, though He is not the same as the "Father," yet appears to be included in the "one God." Jesus Christ as the incarnate Logos was indeed God: God, that is, self-limited for self-revelation to men; but behind and above this manifestation was the infinite Father, to whom Jesus prayed, and who was transcendent even for Him. God was in Him, truly; and yet God was at the same time above and beyond Him. This distinction, which is inevitable directly we affirm the Deity of Jesus, the writers carried back into the sphere of the Eternal, and found themselves compelled to use words which imply that there had *always* been such a distinction between "Father," and "Son" or "Logos," within the unity of the Divine nature itself.

Later Greek thought tried to express the difference—which is, of course, almost inexpressible in any terms of human language—by distinguishing *ousia* (or "being") from *hypostasis* ("substance," or "mode of being"). The Greek Fathers said that while in the Divine nature there was only one *ousia*, there were more *hypostases* than one. It is a profound misfortune that there seemed to be

the channel, or rather agent, through whom all things have come into being. It is clear that he felt no contradiction between these two statements—that the "one Lord" was not, in his mind, a *second* God.

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no way of translating these terms into Latin except by using *substantia* for the Greek *ousia*, and *persona* for the Greek *hypostasis*. That is how our Creeds come to speak of different "persons" in the Godhead. The Greek language had no word for "persons" in our modern sense of the term, and to translate *hypostasis* by "person," unless we constantly remember the technical meaning the word *persona* bore, breaks up the unity of the Godhead, and contradicts the uniform teaching of the New Testament and the Greek Fathers. It is very wholesome to remember, with the early Quakers, that neither "person" nor "Trinity" is a Biblical expression.

What, now, of the third *hypostasis*, or "mode of being," which was distinguished as "The Holy Spirit"? We must recall the threefold experience out of which all this theory developed: the fact that God was known, not only as the infinite Father, not only as having revealed Himself to men in the Logos Christ, but as reproducing His own life in the souls of those who received and obeyed the revelation. The Holy Spirit in the New Testament is always a name for God as thus known—not as a separate "person," but as, through Christ, *living in men* and making their life one with His. If we translate it into *holy enthusiasm*, and remember that "enthusiasm" by its derivation means "God wi hin," we shall be near to the New Testament meaning.

We should get quite away from the simplicity of the New Testament if we attempted, by any formal definition, to distinguish the third *hypostasis* from the second—the "Spirit" from the "Logos" which had always been the life and the light of men (John i. 4), and had now found embodiment in the man Jesus. And yet the fourth Evangelist, in a daring and paradoxical phrase, implies that a change was wrought when Jesus was "glorified." "The Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39).^{*} Obviously, he cannot mean that an

^{*} The expression, taken literally, is in direct contradiction with passages in the Synoptic Gospels, such as Luke iv. 1: "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan." The Synoptists use the language of the Old Testament, and speak of Jesus as being actuated by the Spirit of God, when a mighty spiritual influence was seen to be working in Him, just as they would have spoken of the prophets.

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addition was then made to the Divine nature. He is writing, as ever, in terms of human experience ; and what he implies is that the death and resurrection of Jesus gave man *a new knowledge* of God—that God became known to them in a fulness and a richness never before experienced.

The most distinctive and remarkable feature in the life of the early Church is the presence with it of “ the Spirit.” It was, above everything, the Church of an inspired people. No longer, as in former days, was the gift of the Spirit confined to a few great lawgivers and prophets ; “ on the servants and on the handmaidens ” the Spirit was poured forth (Acts ii. 17, 18). No longer so far off from them “ as even to be near,” God, through Christ, was now pleading in their prayers, conquering in their victories, loving in their love (Rom. viii. 26, 27 ; Eph. iii. 16 ; 1 John iv. 12, 16).

The change is that from a vaguely-conceived inspiring influence to the clearness and richness of a *personal* presence. But “ *the personality of the Holy Spirit* ” is *the personality of the living Christ* and no other : fuller, clearer, mightier than ever prophets and psalmists had known, because recognised as the Spirit of the very Jesus who had lived and died for men. He who had died and risen was living His own sacrificial and conquering life in the soul of those who were united to Him by faith (Gal. ii. 20 ; Eph. iii. 17-19).

Trinitarian Expressions in the New Testament.—The “ three heavenly Witnesses ” of 1 John v. 7, 8, have disappeared from the Revised Version, as they are found in no early Greek MS., and no ancient version except the Latin. They are undoubtedly a gloss, which crept into the text from Latin sources after the doctrine of the Trinity had been formulated about the fourth century A.D. The Trinitarian baptismal formula of Matt. xxviii. 19 is now regarded with much suspicion ; for, though it is present in all the early MSS., the formula is nowhere else in the New Testament connected with the practice of baptism (as it almost certainly would have been, had it been used by Jesus), and the passage is frequently quoted by Eusebius in a simpler form, divested both of the mention of baptism and of the Trinitarian words.

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Putting these aside we find, in the New Testament, no formal statement of Trinitarian doctrine. But the three-fold experience of God, to which we have already alluded, is present throughout the writings which refer to the post-resurrection period. It finds its most notable expression in the great benediction of 2 Cor. xiii. 14, where it should be noted that the order of the terms, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost," is that of experience and not of theology.

But we should note that the terms "God" "Christ," "Spirit," are used with great freedom and flexibility. There is none of the rigidity that would suggest that the thoughts of the writers were tied to any defined formula. Thus in John xiv. Jesus speaks at one time of His disciples being with the Father (verses 2-6); of giving them "another Comforter, the Spirit of truth" (verses 16, 17); and of returning to them Himself (verse 18). There is no perceptible difference of meaning. Again, in Rom. viii. 9-11, Paul uses as practically identical the terms "Spirit of God," "Spirit of Christ," and "Christ." And in 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18, "the Spirit" is twice over identified with "the Lord" (*i.e.*, Christ).

These facts are enough to show that what we find expressed in the New Testament is the unorganised material of Christian experience, on which the Greek intellect afterwards worked, and on the basis of which it built up the doctrine of the Trinity. The process of that later thought, which moulded the "orthodox" conception of the person of Christ and of the Triune God, is dealt with in Part II. Meanwhile, these pregnant words of a modern writer may well be borne in mind:

"It must not be forgotten that, in the framing of this deep doctrine, the aim was still practical. Doubtless the love of dialectical discussion grew keen about it, but in the forming of the doctrine there was no seeking of abstractions for their own sake. Even in its most difficult forms, the doctrine of the Trinity always held true rank as a doctrine of religion. Its existence was due to the fact that the Church was still endeavouring to understand and justify her Christian experience. It is too often forgotten,

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but it is true, that the motive in the construction of the historical doctrine of the Trinity was the desire of the Church to justify her adoration of her Saviour, and to ground His salvation in the eternal reality of God. The resulting doctrine carried its positive affirmations far into the mystery of the Godhead, and often appeared to lose connection with human interests, but the separation was only apparent. In the entire endeavour the Church was seeking eternal foundations for her most precious faith.”*

* W. Newton Clarke, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 231.

PART II

The Person of Christ in
Post-Biblical Thought

CHAPTER XIII

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM SOME EARLY THEORIES

The Nature of the Problem.

Our previous study, of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ so far as this is developed in the New Testament writings, has shown us that it was based entirely on facts of experience, outward and inward: *viz.*, (1) the human life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; (2) the communion with God as their holy and loving Father, into which Jesus had raised His disciples; and (3) the certainty that He had not left them, but was with them still in spiritual presence, reproducing His own life in theirs.

Now, all Christology is at bottom the attempt to set forth and explain *what is involved in Christian experience*.^{*} Paul and "John" and others, reflecting on this great question, connected the inward with the outward experience by the master theory that the human life of Jesus was the *incarnation* of the Divine "Wisdom" or "Word" or Logos, which in all ages had been the life and light of men. This at once broadened out Christianity from the cult of a Jewish sect to a world religion.

But the most vital question of all remained. "The Word became flesh"—but how could this be? How could God, without ceasing to be God, ever become man? This was a question the Greek intellect could not leave alone—particularly when the Christian faith was compelled to justify itself, if it could, in the face of hostile criticism.

The easiest answer of all—to the question how could God become man?—was that the thing was impossible. But man might, by the reception of the Divine Spirit, gradually rise into divinity. This was the answer given by some very early Christians, who could not accept the Pauline and Johannine theory.

^{*} See Workman, *Christian Thought*, pp. 62-72.

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Another very early answer was that God did not really become man, but only *seemed* to do so. This is the "Docetic" solution, which found wide acceptance, especially among the more philosophic minds.

Both these negations the greater Christian thinkers rejected, maintaining steadfastly at once the real humanity and the true Divinity of Christ. But, as time went on, thought veered first to one side and then to the other, according as the human or the Divine aspect of Christ's person made its appeal to men's minds, to the partial exclusion of the other. What the Church did, on the whole, was to steer a middle course, rejecting both extremes. But one great "mediating" theory it also rejected—that of Arius, who thought of Christ as a Being neither truly human nor truly Divine, but somewhere between the two.

Finally, the orthodox Church satisfied itself with the explanation that in Christ there were two "natures," Divine and human, united in a single "person." But it was never explained how this could be: how a single personality could possess a Divine and a human consciousness without confusion and contradiction. And so Christian thought went on oscillating in one direction and in the other—the extremes being ruled out as "heresies."

The fact is, no doubt, that, with the ideas of God and man which then prevailed, no real solution was possible. And indeed, no *complete* solution ever will be possible, till we know what we mean by the terms "God" and "man," and this is only to say that we shall never reach it; for one of the terms at least will always transcend our experience and our attempts to define it.

The purpose of our study is to follow, in its broader outlines, the process of thought that has just been sketched, and to close with an attempt to look at the problem of the Person of Christ in the light of present knowledge.

Some early and opposing Views: (a) Ebionism.—There is, as was pointed out in Part I,* no Christological controversy in the New Testament. But there were deep differences between the more Jewish Christians, who followed Peter and James, and the others, especially Gentiles, who embraced with joy the universalism of Paul and "John." These differences persisted and even deepened, and invaded

* See above, p. 73.

the Christological sphere. The Jewish Christians became known by the general name of *Nazarenes*. *Ebionites* is another name (derived, probably, from a Hebrew word meaning "poor"), which appears to be used sometimes as co-extensive with *Nazarenes*, and sometimes as standing for the more rigid of them. The Ebionites were in strong conflict with Paulinism, and clung to the Mosaic Law. They were content to regard Jesus as a Messianic Prophet and Teacher, the giver of a higher Law, and little more. Their thoughts of salvation were limited and meagre. As none of their writings have come down to us, allowance must be made for the fact that we know their views mainly by what their adversaries said about them. They held firmly by their Jewish monotheism, and many of them took the plain "common-sense" view that the ascription of Divine honours to Jesus was inconsistent with it. They decisively rejected the story of His Virgin Birth. Those of them who regarded Him as Divine at all held the theory afterwards known as *Adoptionism*: that is, they looked on Jesus as an ordinary man who, by the reception of the Spirit after His baptism, became the Son of God.* They adhered to the Jewish apocalyptic ideas in which they had been trained, and expected the Messiah to return in glory.

A section of the Ebionite Christians, whose ideas approximated in some respects to those of the Gnostics, presently to be considered, has its chief representative in CERINTHUS, who appears to have been a contemporary, at Ephesus, with the author of the Fourth Gospel, about the end of the first century. He agreed with the Palestinian Ebionites in rejecting the Virgin Birth and the teaching of Paul, and in holding crude millennial conceptions; but he also agreed with the Gnostics in making a very sharp separation between Spirit and Matter, and therefore in tending towards asceticism. He seems to have held that a celestial "Christ" (whom probably he identified with the Holy Spirit), descended upon Jesus at His baptism, anointed Him for His Messianic work, and left Him again before His Crucifixion—since it was not possible for the "Christ" to suffer.†

* This theory never became an "orthodox" tenet, though it was widely held and lingered long.

† See Ottley, *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 171, also article "Cerinthus" in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III.

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It may have been ideas of this type that Paul was combating in the Epistle to the Colossians (esp. ii. 8-23), and the author of 1 John (esp. iv. 1-3, and v.).

(b) *Gnosticism*.—The Gnostics, properly called so, were at the opposite pole from the Judaising Christians. They carried to an extreme the Pauline thought of the heavenly and pre-existent Christ; and in accordance with the dualistic views of Spirit and Matter which they held, they denied that Jesus was a real man at all. Their Christology was always of the “Docetic” type. They tried to bring the Infinite into relation with the finite by an elaborate system of “æons” or “emanations” from the ineffable Deity, of which Christ was one. Gnosticism arose in a mixture of Greek and oriental philosophy, and Christianity was looked upon as a system of *ideas*, which only the educated could understand, and which did not depend on such external things as facts in history. In some respects it marks a reaction towards paganism,* and it had a profound influence in drawing the early Church towards the notion of *salvation by ideas*—towards theology rather than vital religion. Its tendency was to be “superior,” aristocratic, and esoteric—to look with contempt on the uninitiated. The Gnostics—people who *knew*—professed an “illumination,” or power to interpret, through which, by the use of allegory, incidents both in the Old and New Testaments received the most far-fetched explanations. The chief representatives of Gnosticism proper are BASILIDES, who taught at Alexandria about 117-138 A.D., and VALENTINUS, who lived at Rome from about 138-168.

MARCION, born in Asia Minor, where his views obtained wide acceptance, was a contemporary at Rome with Valentinus, and carried to an extreme Paul’s opposition to Judaism. He was not a philosopher, like most of the Gnostics, and was a man of genuine religion, with a firm hold on the love of God; T. M. Lindsay has called him “an old-world Tolstoy.” He threw over the Old Testament altogether, and regarded its God as quite an inferior being to the Father revealed by Jesus. While his general view of Christ was docetic, he nevertheless held firmly to

* See Sanday, *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, pp. 12, 13, and Workman, p. 35. Workman’s account of Gnosticism (pp. 32-39) is well worth reading.

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the revelation of God's grace in His life and death. He was finally excommunicated for "heresy"—though it must be carefully remembered that at this time there was no fixed standard of "orthodoxy."

(c) *More orthodox Writers : the "Apostolic Fathers."**—Meanwhile, the New Testament thoughts of Christ (apart from Paul's mysticism, which was very imperfectly understood) continued to be expressed by leaders in the Church who are now known as the Apostolic Fathers. They would more correctly be termed "sub-Apostolic." Among these we may mention HERMAS, author of a beautiful though long-winded allegory called *The Shepherd*—which, together with the Epistle of Barnabas, appears at length in the great Sinaitic MS. of the New Testament. It was written at Rome, probably towards the end of the first century. The Christology of Hermas, alone among these "Fathers," seems to be "Adoptionist" in type.† He never once mentions Jesus Christ by name. But he says, "The Holy Pre-existent Spirit, which created the whole creation, God made to dwell in flesh that He desired." This Spirit he calls the "Son of God," and speaks of "the flesh" (*i.e.*, the man Jesus) as its "partner" "co-operating with it in everything." And he speaks of the same Spirit dwelling in other "flesh" which is kept "pure and undefiled."

The Epistle of BARNABAS (written probably at Alexandria between 70 and 80 A.D., in a style of fantastic allegorising) is much fuller in its references to the humiliation of the Son of God, who veiled His splendour in the flesh, who suffered and died and rose again for our redemption, and who is to be the "Judge of quick and dead."

CLEMENT OF ROME wrote a *Letter to the Corinthian Church* about 96 A.D., which, together with the spurious Second Epistle, appears in the Alexandrian MS. of the New Testament. Its object was to heal an acute dissention which had broken out at Corinth, and it is thoroughly Apostolic in tone. "Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of Grace that was shed upon us? And is there

* These writings may be studied, both in the original and in translations, in Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers* (Macmillan, 16s.)

† This is the view of Harnack (*History of Dogma*, I. p. 191), which, as against Ottley (p. 159), appears to the present writer to be correct.

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not one calling in Christ ? ” “ Through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, God called us from darkness to light.” The so-called *Second Epistle of Clement* is a sermon, written later and by a different author, and is also “ orthodox ” in its expressions. It begins, “ Brethren, we ought so to think of Jesus Christ, as of God, as of the Judge of quick and dead. *And we ought not to think mean things of our Salvation ; for, when we think mean things of Him, we expect also to receive mean things.*”

The *Didaché*, or *Teaching of the Apostles*, is a beautiful manual of Christian living and Church order, chiefly of interest in throwing light on the conditions of the primitive Church. It appears to have been written in Syria or Palestine. There is little or no theology in it, but it is deeply Christian in tone. “ We give Thee thanks, Holy Father, for Thy holy Name, which Thou hast made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us through Thy Son Jesus.”

From this brief survey it will appear that while these leaders of the Church held to the teaching of the Apostles, their theology was, as Dr. Sanday says, “ *held in solution*, and not yet precipitated in the form of systematic doctrine.”

CHAPTER XIV

IGNATIUS AND THE APOLOGISTS

The greatest of the "Apostolic Fathers" was IGNATIUS, Bishop of Antioch in Syria, who wrote seven short Letters* to different Churches, while he was on his way, a prisoner, to Rome, where he suffered martyrdom about 115 A.D. Antioch, as we may judge from Acts xi. 26, xiii. 1, was the greatest centre of Christianity in the East, and the organisation of the Early Church had developed there, apparently, more rapidly than elsewhere. Ignatius, at any rate, was much impressed with the need for organisation. One of his great concerns is that in every Church the leaders shall be ordered in three ranks—bishop, presbyters and deacons—and that in everything reverence and obedience shall be rendered to the bishop.† His outlook, and the conditions he pre-supposes, are quite different from those of the *Didaché*, though the latter can hardly have been written much before his letters. The Eucharist he calls "the medicine of immortality,"‡ and it is only "valid" (βεβαία) when "under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it." "It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptise or to hold a love-feast."§

The above has nothing to do with his Christology, but seems needed to indicate his point of view. His doctrine of Christ is in strong opposition both to Ebionism and Docetism||—which, though starting from opposite points, tend to meet, as we have seen in the case of Cerinthus.

* For these Letters see Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 97-162. For comments on them see Ottley, pp. 161-165.

† "Plainly, therefore, we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself." (*Ad Eph.*, 6.)

‡ *Ad Eph.*, 20.

§ *Ad Sm.*, 8.

|| See above, p. 88.

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The idea of a Christ Spirit which descends upon the man Jesus is not so very far removed from that of a Spirit who appears as a phantom man. Both tend to undervalue His real and true humanity, the beauty and perfection of His human character. Both put the emphasis on "Christ" and draw it away from "Jesus." Neither does justice to the Apostolic belief that "the Logos *became* flesh"—that the pre-existent Word or Son of God really "emptied Himself" so far as to take upon Him our complete human nature. This belief was with Ignatius (though he did not dilate upon it in his letters, as he wrote in haste) central and fundamental.

"Be ye deaf, therefore, when any man speaketh to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born, and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, . . . who, moreover, was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him, . . . Christ Jesus, apart from whom we have not true life."*

This, in substance, appears in nearly all the letters. He is at pains, like Peter and Paul in the Acts, to prove that the real sufferings of Jesus were foretold by the prophets. Some of his Jewish hearers had denied it; and Ignatius replies that, even if they were right, his faith does not rest on documents. "As for me, my documents (*ἀρχαῖα*) are Jesus Christ, my inviolable documents are His cross and His death and His resurrection, and faith through Him."† "If those things were done by our Lord in semblance, then am I also a prisoner in semblance."‡ By such language, as Sanday says (p. 10), Ignatius did more than any one else to kill Docetism. But it is the language of religion, not of theology as an abstract doctrine; he feels intensely the reality of the Person of Jesus and the inadequacy of these other theories. One of the few passages in which he writes as a theologian is this:—

"There is one only physician, of flesh and of spirit, generate and ingenerate, God in man, true Life in death, Son of Mary and Son of God, first passible and then impassible, Jesus Christ our Lord."§

* *Ad Trall.*, 9. † *Ad Phil.*, 8. ‡ *Ad Sm.*, 4. § *Ad Eph.*, 7.

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By "generate" and "passible" he means that Jesus was really born and really died: the whole passage is simply intended to press the importance of the conviction that He was truly human and truly Divine; but it is easy to see how out of such passages the logical intellect, working apart from the facts of His life and personality, would evolve the theory of a "double nature."

In some respects his words are less careful than those of the Apostolic writers. He several times calls Jesus "God," which (except in one or two doubtful passages) Paul had never done; and he even speaks of the "blood of God"—an expression which, later, was ruled out as "heresy."* At the same time, he is nearer to Johannine mysticism than any other of these sub-Apostolic writers. Jesus Christ is "our inseparable life"; believers are "closely joined with Jesus Christ as Jesus Christ is with the Father." What Ignatius is really concerned about is not dogmatic belief but faith that works through love. *"Faith is the beginning and love the end; and the two being found in unity are God; while all things else follow in their train unto true nobility."*†

The Apologists.‡—Ignatius, it is clear, accepted the Johannine thought of Christ as the Incarnation of the eternal Logos; but he wrote for those who were already Christians, and he did not think it needful to develop the thought. But about 150 A.D. several leading Christians felt the impulse to go further, and carry the war into the enemy's camp. The work of the "Apologists" was to prove to their rulers and persecutors, and also to the philosophers, that Christianity is not only a revelation from God, but is the highest and truest philosophy. This, as we have seen,§ had also been attempted, according to their light, by the Gnostics; but any success they achieved was at the cost of the historical element in Christianity. Mere facts in history were, in their thought, hardly worth the notice of a philosopher, who was concerned with ideas.

* Known technically as "Patripassianism": the doctrine that the Father Himself suffered on the Cross.

† *Ad Eph.*, 14.

‡ For the influence of Greek thought on Christianity, see Workman, pp. 21-31, and for the work of the early Apologists, ditto, pp. 39-44.

§ See above, p. 88.

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The Apologists, on the other hand, remained true to the Apostolic belief that Christianity is essentially *a revelation through history*, and they did not, at least when compared with the Gnostics, ignore or depreciate the person and work of the historic Jesus. It is through Him, they urge, that the true nature of God has been revealed, and that men are enabled to live the ideal life. Their plea has two sides : Christianity is true, first because it satisfies the reason (though reason alone could not have discovered it) ; and secondly, because it enables common people, and not philosophers only, to live the sort of life that is recognised as the highest and the best. Their aim was "to lift up Christianity from being the religion of a sect, founded upon enthusiasm, into a world-religion that appealed to the universal conscience and reason" (Workman).

The Epistle to Diognetus.—This is called by Lightfoot* (who places it, with some hesitation, about 150 A.D.), "one of the noblest and most impressive of early Christian apologies in style and treatment." The writer is unknown, but the person addressed may have been the tutor of Marcus Aurelius. After explaining why the Christians reject the absurd idolatries of paganism, and the equally foolish ceremonies of the Jews, the writer gives a beautiful picture of the lives they lead, which he sums up by the aphorism, "What the soul is in the body, this the Christians are in the world." The faith that inspires them is not a human discovery, but has been revealed to them by God Himself, who has sent His beloved Son, the Artificer through whom He made the worlds, to reveal Himself and ransom them from sin. Note the following beautiful passage :—

"In gentleness and meekness He sent Him, as a king might send his son who is a king. He sent Him as sending God ; He sent Him as a man unto men ; He sent Him as Saviour, as using persuasion, not force ; for force is no attribute of God."

"The death of the Son," says Ottley, p. 188, "is not stated [here] to be an atoning sacrifice for sin, but rather a supreme manifestation of Divine love, and the source to mankind of Divine healing, light, strength, and life."

* See Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 487-511.

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The Apology of Aristides was addressed either to the Emperor Hadrian or his son, by "ARISTIDES, a philosopher of Athens," and was probably written between A.D. 125 and 140. A translation into Syriac was discovered by Dr. J. Rendel Harris at the convent of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai, in 1889* ; and it was found that the greater part of it was already known in Greek, having been embodied in an early Christian romance containing the story of Barlaam and Josaphat.

Aristides divides mankind into "four races"—the Barbarians, Greeks, Jews and Christians. A great part of his *Apology* is devoted to showing the unworthy beliefs and practices into which three of these "races" had fallen, and to contrasting the purity and nobility of the lives of the Christians. The treatise is mostly ethical, and there is very little theology in it. The writer, however, thus expresses the fundamental faith of the Christians, quoting, apparently, the statements of belief which were already taking shape, and which later were formulated as the "Apostles' Creed": "The Christians reckon the beginning of their religion from Jesus Christ, who is named the Son of God most High ; and it is said that [God]† came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin took and clad Himself with flesh, and in a daughter of man there dwelt the Son of God. . . . He was pierced by the Jews ; and He died and was buried ; and they say that after three days He rose and ascended to heaven."

JUSTIN MARTYR, the most celebrated of the Apologists, was a native of Samaria. He was a diligent student of philosophy, especially Stoicism, but eventually found in Christianity what the Stoics could not give him. He became a fervent advocate of his new faith at Rome, Ephesus, and elsewhere, and was martyred about 165 A.D. He wrote an *Apology*, which he addressed to the reigning Emperor, and in which he gives an interesting account of his search for God ; and a *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*,

* See *The Newly Recovered Apology of Aristides*, by Helen B. Harris (Hodder and Stoughton, 1891). The most important parts of the *Apology* are given in English, as translated by J. Rendel Harris.

† So in the Syriac ; in the Greek (of "Barlaam and Josaphat") the word "God" is omitted.

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which presents, in lively style, the sort of controversies in which he had been engaged.

Like the other Apologists, he starts from belief in the one God, who, Himself the Ineffable and Unknown, has revealed Himself in His Son. Jesus Christ is for him much more than a man in time ; He is the Eternal Logos through whom God has always in some measure been revealing Himself. Every truth reached by Hebrew prophets—and, more than that, by every true philosopher—is due to Christ the Logos. The Logos means for Justin what it meant for the Stoics—the immanent Divine reason ; but “ the *whole* Word of God, the Divine reason itself in a *personal* form, was disclosed only in Jesus Christ ” (Ottley). He has not, however, reached a conception of God from which he can show how the Logos could be at once one with God and numerically distinct from Him. He is content to speak of the Logos as the “ offspring ” of God, just as a fire may give off sparks of its own substance. Nor does he quite know what to do with the Holy Spirit, though he speaks of Him as holding “ the third place ” in the Godhead, and as an object of Christian worship.

Holding as he does that it was Christ as the Logos who inspired the prophets, he devotes much attention, even in the *Apology*, and still more in the *Trypho*, to the fulfilment of prophecy in the life of Jesus.* But his use of the Old Testament is, like that of most of the New Testament writers (though they never attribute such teaching to Jesus), wholly uncritical : everything is to be understood as type and allegory ; the natural and historical meaning of the writers he never considers.† Also, he has little or nothing to say concerning Sin and the Atonement ; redemption is with him mainly an intellectual matter, clearing the mind of error and of the dominion of the demonic powers.

It will thus be seen that, broad and helpful as is much of the thought of Justin, it has its limitations. It is so taken up with the idea of the pre-existent Christ that it does scant justice to the human figure of Jesus and to His saving work for men. While it did inestimable service in

* For this see Glover, *Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, ch. vi., especially pp. 175-195.

† “ The really fundamental defect in all patristic theology was the imperfect understanding of the Old Testament ” (Sanday, p. 17).

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presenting Christianity to the pagan world as a reasonable faith, and while (unlike Stoicism and Gnosticism) it showed that the Gospel is universal, and can lift up even the uneducated into saints and sages, it overlooked much that made it, to these humbler souls, the power of a new life ; and it helped to prepare the way for some of the barren speculation of the centuries that followed.

CHAPTER XV

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA AND ORIGEN

The Apologists of the middle of the second century found their spiritual successors in two great Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, whose thought it is therefore well to consider at this stage.* Like Justin Martyr and the other Apologists, they show a breadth of vision, a sunny expansiveness, and a freedom from theological fetters, which is in striking contrast to much of the religious thought that followed, particularly in the west. At the same time, they did much to help forward the transformation of Christianity from an experience of personal salvation by Jesus Christ into a system of metaphysics.†

At Alexandria the conflict of religions was intense, as we may see "writ large" in Kingsley's *Hypatia*. It was "the seat of the most virile Jewish culture of the time, and was also the head-centre of Neoplatonism, the profoundest and purest expression of the culture of the ancient non-Christian world, and a masterly rival to Christianity" (R. M. Jones). A Catechetical School for Christians had been established there—when, it is unknown—of which Pantænus, the teacher of Clement, was one of the greatest lights. "It was largely through the work of the great teachers of this School that Christianity was made a part of the thought and civilisation of the ancient world."

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA was born about 150 A.D. and was head of the School from 190 to 203. This is the time of his fame; he died probably about 212. He appears to have been born a pagan, but there is no account of his

* For Clement and Origen, see Workman, pp. 44-56.

† For Clement see Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, ch. ix.; also R. M. Jones, *Selections from the Writings of Clement and Alexandria*, with Introduction (Headley Brothers, 1s. 6d. net).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

conversion. His three chief works are an *Address to the Greeks* ; the *Instructor*, a manual of Christian discipline ; and the *Stromateis* or “ miscellanies ” [literally “ clothes-bags ”], a collection of disconnected thoughts. He had read (superficially, perhaps) all there was to read in his day, and he uses his learning freely, pagan as well as Jewish. No Christian writer quotes so largely from the “ heathen ” poets. By the use of allegory he can find spiritual teaching anywhere. His Christian faith is one of sunshine and joy and song, which brings him into sympathy with all things human, philosophy included—though he can hardly be called a deep philosopher. What he tried to do was to claim the whole world of human thought and experience for Jesus Christ ; and, “ with all his very manifest defects, there is no one whose vision of what the faith of Jesus Christ was intended to do for mankind was so full or so true.”*

It is in Clement we find the first real attempt to construct a Philosophy of Christianity, not merely as a defence against attack from without, but as a house for Christians themselves to live in. For him, as for Philo, who had taught at Alexandria nearly two centuries before, the central conception, which unites faith and knowledge, is that of the Logos ; but it is now the Logos as incarnated in Jesus Christ. As with Justin, God Himself is the One inexpressible Being, and the Logos is His expression. But the Logos is not merely “ projected ” like a spark from the central fire ; it is God Himself immanent in His world. The “ Word,” or “ Son,” has been always in the world, teaching the Greeks by philosophy, and the Jews by law and prophecy ; but now fully manifested by the Incarnation. It is through the Incarnation that we can recognise the Logos as *personal*, as full of *love* to men, as our *Saviour*. T. R. Glover says (*Conflict of Religions*, p. 297), that the warm active Divine love, which Jesus associated with “ your heavenly Father,” Clement, under the stress of his philosophy, finds in the Logos. It is the sense of this ever-present saving love that makes the Christian life of Clement joyful and full of hope. The following is a characteristic passage, from the *Address to the Greeks* :

* Hort, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 93.

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“ This is the New Song, the manifestation of the Logos that was in the beginning, and before the beginning. The Saviour, who existed before, has in recent days appeared. He who really *is* has appeared ; for the Logos, who ‘ was with God,’ and by whom all things were created, has appeared as our Teacher. The Logos, who in the beginning bestowed on us life as Creator, when He formed us, taught us to live well when He appeared as our Teacher ; that as God He might afterwards supply to us the life that never ends. He, the merciful God, ‘ emptied Himself ’ to save men. And now the Logos Himself clearly speaks to thee, shaming thy unbelief ; yea, I say, the Logos of God *became man that thou mayest learn from man how man may become God.*”

This expression, “ man may become God,” is common in Clement.* It shows, says Glover, “ how far Christianity has travelled from Palestine.” And if we ask what it means, we find that, as with Justin, it is more a matter of knowledge than of cleansing from sin. “ If a man know himself, he shall know God, and knowing God shall become like to Him.” It is not at all that Clement sets before him a low standard of life, but that his optimism makes salvation too easy. Like most Greeks, he has not a deep sense of human sin, or of the Divine holiness. He makes but little of the Cross. His insistence on “ knowledge ” brings him near to the Gnostics, and indeed he often calls the Christian “ the true Gnostic,” as opposed to the false ones who denied the reality of the Incarnation. That in Jesus God really became man, he strongly holds, and yet he uses expressions which have a Docetic sound. The Logos, he says, “ took the *mask* of a man, and moulded it for himself in flesh, and played a part in the *drama* of man’s salvation.” “ He ate—not on account of His body, which was held together by holy power, but that it might not occur to those who consorted with Him . . . that He was manifested in mere appearance. He Himself was entirely without passion, and into Him entered no emotional movement, neither pleasure nor pain.”

* The word used is, of course, *Θεός* and not *ὁ Θεός*. It indicates, says Dr. Inge (*Personal Idealism and Mysticism*, p. 90), “ too low an idea of God ” among the Greek fathers, “ for whom *Theos* was a very fluid concept.”

ORIGEN

It is clear that Clement, thought he holds to the authority of Scripture (including the New Testament, which by this time was taking its place as part of the Bible), has got far away from the gracious Figure of the Synoptic Gospels, and even from the Johannine Jesus who wept by the grave of Lazarus.

“For the Abba Father whom Jesus loved [says T. R. Glover] he substituted the great Unknowable, and then he had to bring in a figure unfamiliar to the thought of Jesus—the Logos, whom he clothed with many of the attributes of the Father of Jesus, and then identified with Jesus Himself. Not unnaturally in this combination the historic is outweighed by the theoretic element, and indeed receives very little attention. The thought of Incarnation is to Clement much more important than the Personality.”*

And so it is to all these Greek thinkers.

A greater mind than Clement's was that of ORIGEN (186-254 A.D.), who, after an interval, followed him as head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria.† His life was one of poverty and hard work; he maintained himself as a layman by lecturing at Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Athens and elsewhere, after he had been driven from Alexandria, probably on a charge of heterodoxy. He bore his privations with great gentleness and humility, and died at the age of sixty-eight, after having been tortured in the Decian persecution. “Though he does not bear the conventional title of Saint, no saintlier man is to be found in the long line of ancient Fathers of the Church” (Hort).

Origen is as wide as Clement in his sympathies, but definitely regarded the Christian Scriptures and tradition as authoritative revelation. All his teaching professes to be based upon the Bible; but his use of the most fantastic allegorism enables him to read into it almost what he chooses. Thus, in Joshua, the kings are the “names of vices.” The canon of the New Testament was not yet fixed, and in discussing the authorship of the books he is a sound historical critic. He wrote or preached on a large proportion of the books of both Testaments. “With

* *Conflict of Religions*, p. 298.

† For Origen, see Hort, *Lectures on the Ante-Nicene Fathers* pp. 116-138

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more discrimination than Clement, he introduced everything worth knowing into the sphere of theology, completely welding together Christianity and the culture and science of the age." (Workman.) The most diverse schools of Christian thought afterwards appealed to him as an authority ; Harnack says that he is of all theologians the most many-sided, and that " orthodox theology of all creeds has never advanced beyond the circle mapped out by his mind." What led to his being charged with heterodoxy was no doubt the width of his vision ; the optimism which he shared with Clement, and which led him to under-rate the reality of evil ; and the fact that he believed in the possibility of repentance in the future life, and in the final restoration of all men. His thoughts of the Atonement are poor, and he was content (with Irenæus) to regard it as a ransom paid to the devil, who after all was cheated by the Resurrection ! His greatest work is a very careful refutation, in eight books, of the formidable attack on Christianity which some time before had been made by Celsus, a learned lawyer devoted to the established order, alike in thought and in government. Origen's reply is marked by candour and patience, and is " at once the best and the most comprehensive defence of the Christian faith which has come down to us from the days of the Fathers " (Hort).

In Christology he is quite on the lines of Clement ; but he is not content to think of God as simply the Incomprehensible. He is *good*, and therefore seeks to communicate Himself to men by revealing Himself in the Logos. Origen states more distinctly than Clement the distinct hypostasis (or " personality ") of the Logos, and makes more of the human Jesus ; yet he can only account for Him by the theory that in Him " two natures " became completely merged. Further, he taught that the Logos or " Son " did not begin to be in time ; He is co-eternal with the Father, and His " generation " is an eternal process. It seems that he first used the term *ὁμοούσιος*, " of identical nature," in speaking of the relation of the Son to the Father—the term which afterwards became the battle-ground of a fierce controversy. And yet he insists on His subordination to the Father, appealing to such passages as " My Father is greater than I " ; and, inasmuch

ORIGEN

as he attributes free-will and temptation to Jesus, he does not think of Him as, like God, *unalterably* good. He is restrained from attempting a complete speculative answer to such difficulties by his respect for the gospel story ; and yet he penetrates more deeply into the intellectual mystery of Christ than anyone had done before. He seriously tries, though without entire success, to recognise the truth and significance of the manhood of Jesus. " The fact of the Incarnation, as presented by Origen, reveals not only the condescension of God in manifesting Himself in a human life, but the capacity of human nature to become actually one with God " (Ottley).

One passage may be quoted in conclusion to illustrate Origen's style and thought. He is replying to the objection of Celsus (which expresses a difficulty felt by many even to-day) that the Incarnation took place so late in human history, and in such an obscure corner of the world.

" When God sent Jesus to the human race, it was not [as Celsus had mockingly said] as though He had just awaked from a long sleep ; but Jesus, though He has only now for worthy reasons fulfilled the Divine plan of His Incarnation, has at all times been doing good to the human race. For no noble deed among men has ever been done without the Divine Logos visiting the souls of those who even for a brief space were able to receive such operations of the Logos . . . There is nothing absurd in the fact that to the Jews, with whom were the prophets, the Son of God was sent ; so that, beginning with them in bodily form, He might arise in power and spirit upon a world of souls desiring to be no longer bereft of God." *

* *Adv. Celsum*, vi. 78 f. (Quoted by Hort).

CHAPTER XVI

IRENÆUS AND TERTULLIAN

"THE APOSTLES' CREED"

Having traced the Christology of the more important Greek Fathers to the middle of the third century, we now go back a little, to follow the development of Western or Latin thought.* The difference between the Hellenic and the Roman cast of mind was great. "The Greeks," Paul said, "seek after wisdom" (or philosophy); abstract speculation was their native air. The Roman mind was concrete and practical, concerning itself with law and organisation; and, finding no sure foothold in metaphysics, it tended to rest upon authority and tradition. The Latin genius which produced a world empire ruled by Roman law, made the Church also a great organised system, ruled by a hierarchy of Bishops and clergy, and resting on a traditional "faith" of which it was the only authorised exponent. "With the East faith becomes spiritual vision; with the West it is primarily assent to external authority."† And, we must remember, it was the Latin much more than the Greek mind that moulded the theology of Western Europe down to our own times. It is to it we owe the hard legal or "forensic" terms in which the great thoughts of the New Testament have so often been expounded, both by Catholics and Protestants.

A bridge between Greek and Latin thought is found in IRENÆUS, who was a native of Asia Minor, and in early life a disciple of Polycarp. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was a contemporary of Ignatius, and had in his youth talked with John and others who had known Jesus in the flesh.‡

* For this section see Workman, pp. 91-109.

† Workman, p. 93.

‡ We learn this from a letter of Irenæus, quoted by Hort in his *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 45 (where, for *Paul*, read *Polycarp*).

Christianity seems to have spread from Western Asia Minor to the Greek colony of Marseilles, and thence up the Rhone to Lyons. When Irenæus migrated thither is not known, but he was appointed Bishop of Lyons in 178 A.D., and he remains for the rest of that century the leading Christian in Western Europe. His chief work is *The Refutation of Gnosis falsely so called*, which is extant, in a Latin translation, in five books. He refutes the Gnostics by confronting them with the "rule of faith" derived directly from the Apostles, which he labours to show was in agreement with the Scriptures as a whole. Of this Apostolic "rule of faith" the Bishops are the depositaries, and the Church is the only authoritative exponent.

Like Justin and other Apologists, Irenæus starts with the thought of God; but God for him is not simply the Incomprehensible God of the philosophers. He is an intelligent and personal Being, knowable by men, because, being essentially Love or Goodness, He has limited Himself and come within the range of human knowledge. This self-limiting principle in the Divine nature is the Logos, which has eternally co-existed with the Father and has been (as Justin and Clement said) the revealer of God to men in all ages, especially to the prophets of the Old Testament.

But it is in the Incarnation that this self-revealing of God has reached its highest point. In Jesus Christ the invisible has become visible; the glory of God manifests itself in the living man. Irenæus has a really strong hold, as the Apologists had not, upon the person of the historic Jesus. His entry into human life was not, as the Gnostics thought, a fall or degradation; it was the turning-point of redemption. "*He was made what we are, that He might make us what He is Himself.*" The redemption He brought was not only for the few; "the victory of Christ is that of humanity at large, and thereby is secured for all who will grasp it the gift of the highest good—immortal life and the knowledge and vision of God"* (Ottley). To this movement of the Divine pity man must respond by obedience, gratitude, and self-surrendering love, if the work of Christ is to be completed in him.

"God, therefore," says Irenæus, "became man; and the

* "The life of a man is the vision of God" (Iren. iii. 20-22).

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Lord Himself was our Saviour. For the Mediator between God and man must needs, through His own affinity to each, bring both together into amity and fellowship, so presenting man to God and revealing God to man." He proceeds to develop, on Pauline lines, the importance of the real humanity of Christ. Christ is the second Adam, who gathers up (Eph. i. 10) or *recapitulates* in Himself all that is of worth in manhood—all that is man's true nature—triumphantly fulfilling the destiny for which man was intended and prepared by God, and thus "joining the end to the beginning." This idea of "recapitulation" (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις*) is one of the deepest and most pregnant thoughts contributed by Irenæus. Like the New Testament writers, he was able to hold the Divinity and humanity of Christ together, without any of the confusion of the "double nature" theory.

This brief sketch of some of the thoughts of Irenæus may be enough to explain the position of importance which his writings afterwards held, in guiding into "orthodox" channels the theology of the Church, in West and East alike. He was able, as none had done before him, to express the deep implications of Christian experience in concrete terms, such as persons who were not philosophers could (in some measure) understand. Dr. Sanday describes him "as representing the best type of orthodoxy."*

Space only allows us to add, with regret, that his thoughts on the significance of the death of Christ are not at the same level. Irenæus was the first, so far as we know, to develop the grotesque idea of the Atonement as a ransom paid by God to the devil—a compensation for the rights of dominion which, it was supposed, the latter had acquired over mankind. The crude legal and commercial ideas which satisfied many Roman minds are here apparent. The subject was not, however, so far as we know, at any time worked out carefully or consistently by Irenæus. He is optimistic, like Clement and Origen, and has not a deep sense of sin.

Another great figure in Western Christianity, towards the end of the second and early in the third centuries, is that of TERTULLIAN (about 150-230 A.D.). He first, and Augustine after him, are the two greatest representatives of the Church

* *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, p. 22.

TERTULLIAN

in "Africa,"* and it was they who chiefly moulded the theology of the West.

"The fierce Tertullian," as Matthew Arnold calls him in a well-known sonnet,† was a man of genius, of a fiery impatient spirit, not unlike that of Carlyle.‡ He was born a pagan, but has left no account of his conversion—only hints which indicate that what chiefly moved him was the constancy of the Christian martyrs under persecution. He was trained for a lawyer, read widely, and practised rhetoric. He married, and after his conversion held the office of presbyter. He professed to abhor philosophy, but his thought shows many influences from Stoicism. He attacked the "heretics," but in later life joined the Montanists (who were ruled out for "heresy"), fiercely assailed the Roman clergy, and left the Church—whether voluntarily or under compulsion we do not know. His writings, says Glover, were unread by the Church throughout the Middle Ages, but were studied again after the Renaissance, and did much to stimulate the Reformation. It is from Tertullian that many of the doctrines specifically known as "Evangelical" are mainly derived.

The Montanists—"that un pitying Phrygian sect," as Matthew Arnold calls them—were the first great body of "protestants" against the growing organisation and secularisation of the Church. They tried to return to the simplicity and Spirit-filled enthusiasm of the primitive Church, having many points of resemblance to the Puritans, and still more to the early Quakers. Tertullian's intense nature was drawn to them because of their lofty and even ascetic standard of life, their hatred of sin, and their consciousness of the Spirit as a living reality.

Among his chief works are an *Apology*, addressed to the Governor of Africa at a time of persecution (197 A.D.), a treatise against Marcion in five books, many controversial

* That is, the proconsular province of Africa, which was quite distinct from Egypt, being separated from it by deserts. It was in close communication, by sea, with Italy. It answers roughly to the modern Tunis, and Carthage was its capital. It was then a country of very advanced civilisation.

† *The Shepherd and the Kid*.

‡ For Tertullian, see Glover, *Conflict of Religions*, pp. 305-347, a fascinatingly interesting chapter. Also Hort, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* pp. 93-109.

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writings, and a kind of preface to them all, entitled *On the Prescription of Heretics*, which Hort characterises as “most plausible and most mischievous.” The word “prescription” is a legal term for the barring of a claim, and suggests that it is no use to employ reasoned argument or Scripture proof—the only way with heretics is to shut them up by telling them that *our* belief is the belief of the Church based on the “rule of faith” handed down from the Apostles and therefore it must be true.

Turning to his Christology, which is our proper subject, Tertullian agrees with Irenæus, as against the Apologists, and Marcion, that God can be known as essentially *Goodness*.

But his idea of God, being that of a lawyer, is mainly based on the thought of sovereignty and administration. God's single lordship over the world is administered by a delegation to “Persons” with, as it were, individual rights and functions—the Logos (or Son) and the Spirit—as the stages of His self-manifestation require. Tertullian had not reached Origen's thought of the “Eternal Generation” of the Logos, and can only regard its coming forth from God as Son, as if this were an event in time. Hence he says, “there was a time when the Son was not.” Thus his thought of the Trinity is what is called “economic” rather than essential—it has to do with the process of God's self-manifestation, rather than with what He may be supposed to be in Himself.

Tertullian's chief contribution to Christology is his substitution of the term “Son”—concrete, personal, warm—for the cold and abstract “Logos,”* and his expansion of the idea of Sonship. “His statement, in spite of some confusions, has at least the great merit of introducing and emphasising the idea of *moral relationships* within the Deity, and so he marks a return on the part of theology to the ethical idea of God.” (Ottley). He has as strong a hold as Irenæus on the real humanity of Christ, and his thought is at the opposite pole from Gnosticism or Docetism. “Christ loved man even in his uncleannesses.” He uses the strongest language of which even he was capable in insisting that matter, or flesh, is not

* Compare Rendel Harris's remark that “no Christian has ever yet started singing ‘How sweet the name of *Logos* sounds.’”

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derogatory to God. He anticipates Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* in saying, "It may be questioned whether the flesh carries the soul, or the soul the flesh ; whether the flesh serves the soul, or the soul serves the flesh." His sympathy with Montanism did not carry him into ascetic refusal of natural joys.

As regards his thoughts on Redemption, his intense consciousness of sin led him to deeper conclusions than Irenæus, Clement, or Origen. He lays great stress on the passion of Christ, but tries to explain its efficacy in too legal phraseology, by the use of terms like "guilt," "merit," "satisfaction."

"*The Apostles' Creed.*" This is the most convenient point at which to allude to the development of this "Symbol," which became the standard of orthodox belief in the Western Church.* It began doubtless in the Confession of faith that was required of candidates at baptism, and its earliest form was probably that which is preserved in the A.V. of Acts viii. 37, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (This itself, as the R.V. shows, is post-biblical.) Gradually, as converts were gathered from heathenism, more was required of them—a statement of their belief in one God, in the virgin birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and so forth. We have noted stages of its development in the words of Ignatius, and the Apology of Aristides†; and further stages are found in the "rule of faith" used by Irenæus and Tertullian. For a long time each great section of the Church preserved its own "Symbol," which was believed to have come down from the Apostles. This particular creed was gradually formed by putting together the chief points of these local "Symbols," and did not reach its final form till the eighth century. Like all elaborated creeds, it is the expression of the form of belief which emerged victorious from conflict. In particular, this Creed bears everywhere the signs of the long struggle with Gnosticism. It was never received, in its full form, as authoritative in the Eastern Churches.

* For details, see Curtis, *A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith*, pp. 44-64.

† See above, pp. 92, 95.

CHAPTER XVII

ARIANISM AND THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA *

Christian philosophy had arisen in the attempt (which was quite inevitable) to defend "the faith" against the attacks of pagan philosophers, and to present in reasonable form the truth as to Jesus Christ and God to which Christian experience testified. This, as we have seen, had been achieved by the development of the Johannine doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos, and this in turn had inevitably led up to the gradual recognition of distinctions within the Godhead—and so, to the conception of God as a Tri-unity.

These theological refinements, however, were to a large extent distasteful to many serious-minded Christians, who, then as now, were content to receive "the faith" as it came to them from authorities whom they revered, and saw no need for philosophising about it. Irenæus and Tertullian both had sympathy with this attitude of mind. In many, however, it took the form of a demand for something simpler and more intelligible than even they could offer; and this demand for simplicity resulted in the doctrines known under the general name of "*Monarchianism*." By the "monarchy" of God was understood the assertion of His plain undivided *unity*, dear especially to those who had been Jews, which seemed to be threatened by the difficult doctrines of the Logos and of the Trinity. Unitarianism indeed, in the modern sense of the term, was practically unknown in the early centuries. All Christians seem to have been satisfied to think of Jesus as Divine; they would all have accepted the statements of what were the accepted facts about Him in the "Apostles' Creed"; the difficulty was, as it has always

* For this section see Workman, pp. 61-83.

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been, so to express the general belief in His Divinity as to be consistent with the conviction of His real manhood.

In the third century "Monarchianism" took two principal forms, which we may broadly distinguish as (i.) "Adoptionist" and (ii.) "Modalist," according as attention was fixed mainly on the human side of Christ, or on the Divine.

(i.) *Adoptionist Monarchianism* finds its chief representatives in two leaders at Rome, named *Theodotus* (before and after 200 A.D.), and in the East in *Paul of Samosata*, who became Bishop of Antioch in 262. Broadly speaking, they all held the Ebionite view that Christ was an ordinary man exalted to Divine dignity because of His holiness and the descent of the Spirit upon Him.* It seems to us a pity that the Church authorities could not allow these simpler views to be taught for what they were worth, in the faith that Truth would prevail, without trying to compel everyone to express himself in the same way. But the age of intolerance had come, and the only way to preserve the unity of the Church seemed to be to insist on uniformity of belief. The Theodotians were cut off from communion by the authorities of the Church at Rome. A synod of Bishops met at Antioch in 269 and condemned the doctrines of Paul of Samosata. It is remarkable that Paul used, while the Synod condemned, the word *ὁμοούσιος*, "of identical nature," which Origen had also used of the relation of the Logos to the Father. The reason they condemned it was, apparently, that Paul intended by this term to deny the *personality* of the Logos,—the Logos being, in his thought, simply an attribute of God which descended upon and inspired the man Jesus.

(ii.) *Modalist Monarchianism* started from the opposite side, and found, in the Son and Spirit, simply different *modes* or manifestations of the one Divine Being. It is often known as "*Sabellianism*," from Sabellius, its most philosophic exponent, who came from Africa to Rome about 215. It was content to regard Jesus as simply "God," and therefore tended to obscure His real humanity. Some of the Sabellians spoke of "God" as suffering on

* See above, p. 87.

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the Cross, and were therefore known as "Patripassians."* Sabellius himself, like Paul of Samosata, used the word *ὁμοούσιος*. The two views, though starting from opposite poles, meet in the middle: neither finds room for any real Incarnation.† The Sabellian view was ably controverted by both Tertullian and Origen, but it proved difficult to deal with—largely because it seemed to exalt the position of Christ, and so was not only relatively simple but attractive to devout and unphilosophic minds. Indeed the tendency which is displayed in Sabellianism to make Jesus simply "God," and which may be broadly characterised as "docetic," lay very deep in the Church, and no doubt did much to provoke the great Arian reaction which followed. As we shall see, it continued long after Arianism was conquered, and has remained to this day an apparently ineradicable bias of many truly Christian minds.

Arianism. This great "heresy" begins practically with the fourth century. ARIUS, a presbyter at Alexandria, had been a pupil of Lucian of Antioch, who himself was influenced by Paul of Samosata. But Arius regarded the Logos not as an attribute of God but as a personal being—not God, but *created* by the only God—who had taken the place of the ordinary human soul in Jesus. Christ was thus neither God nor man, but an intermediate being between the two—in fact, a demi-god. Such a conception was easy to hold, especially for those who had been pagans, and it met with wide acceptance, especially in the East. Arius, about 318 A.D., directly challenged Origen's statement of the "eternal generation" of the Son, by saying "there was when He was not": he would not, like Tertullian, say a *time*, for he was philosophic enough to recognise that time does not apply to the eternal order of things.

The system of Arius was purely intellectual, and, as has often been pointed out, it contained no doctrine of

* Compare Tertullian's caustic phrase: "Sabellius did two jobs for the devil at Rome: he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father." There is, however, a deep truth in "Patripassianism": the truth that the eternal heart of love itself suffers because of human sin.

† Note the remark about Ebionism and Docetism meeting in the case of Cerinthus (above, p. 87).

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redemption. But it was supported by many texts of Scripture (notably John xiv. 28, "My Father is greater than I," and others in the fourth Gospel) taken apart from their context. Most of the many passages in the New Testament which teach the "subordination" of the Son to the Father were pressed into service; and many similar expressions used by Clement, Origen and others. And the doctrine was popularised by Arius in a collection of songs, so that its phrases became catchwords with the multitude, and the most sacred mysteries of the faith were vulgarised.*

The great opponent of Arius was ATHANASIUS, a young man who had already established his reputation as the most accomplished theologian in Egypt. The chief supporter was Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, to whom, on his expulsion from Alexandria, Arius betook himself, and who became the real leader of the movement.

Just at this time (323) *Constantine*, by his victory over Licinius, became sole Emperor, and, having been converted (in name at least) to Christianity, threw over the new religion the power of the State. He found the Church of his adoption, in the East at any rate, shaken to its foundations by a quarrel he could in no way understand. Arius had returned to Alexandria, and was openly defying the Bishop to do his worst. Constantine wrote a letter rating them for contending about "these small and very insignificant questions," and sent it by the hand of Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, who did his best to reconcile the combatants, but in vain.

Then Constantine determined, like the statesman that he was, to call a general Council of bishops, to settle what the faith of the Church really was. In answer to his summons, 318 bishops, and a vast concourse of lesser clergy, mostly from the East, met at Nicæa in June, 325. This is the great COUNCIL OF NICÆA, the first of six "Ecumenical Councils." The Arian leaders were allowed to speak first. Then the conservatives, led by Eusebius of Cæsarea, the Church historian, proposed a

* The root of Arianism is a philosophic reaction in the conception of God—as of a Being who is out of relation to the finite world, and can only communicate with it through an intermediary. Arius has nothing to say about the *love* of God.

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formula which everyone would have gladly signed, and which would have left the question exactly where it was. Probably most of those present did not wish for any closer definition of their belief in Christ than those they already possessed. But the Emperor himself, acting probably under the advice of Hosius, proposed the insertion into the formula of the historian Eusebius, of the critical word *ὁμοούσιος* ("of identical substance or nature"); and this was advocated with great skill and learning by Athanasius, who had entered the Council as secretary to the bishop of Alexandria. He carried the Council with him, and the Arians found themselves in a very small minority. Many, probably, were actuated by motives less noble than zeal for the truth, for they knew that the winning party would use its victory to the detriment of its opponents.

In the end the Council adopted, almost unanimously, the formula afterwards known as the *Creed of Nicæa*,* adding a sentence anathematising those who used the Arian phrases. Arianism thus became the first "heresy" strictly so called, for the Church had not previously expressed its collective mind. The central point of the Creed of Nicæa is the strong assertion of the full essential Deity of Jesus Christ, as "God of God, Light of Light, . . . of one substance with the Father, . . . who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, entering humanity."

However much we may regret the attempt to frame a formula which should be forced upon Christians by the might of the secular arm, there can be no doubt that something vital was at stake in this great controversy. Thomas Carlyle, who had no bias in favour of orthodoxy, declared his settled conviction that "if Arianism had triumphed at Nicæa, Christianity would have dwindled away into a legend." It is no answer to this to point to the saint and missionary Ulphilas, who converted the Goths to Arian Christianity. People are constantly better than their theoretic creeds, and we must judge, not by individuals, nor even by a barbaric tribe like the Goths, but by the effect

* The "Nicene Creed," recited in the Communion Service of the Anglican Church, is an enlargement of that actually adopted at Nicæa and is commonly (though on insufficient evidence) ascribed to the Council held at Constantinople in 381 A.D.

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upon the whole Church, had an irrational and semi-pagan scheme of thought been forced upon it. The mind of the Church at its best was certainly with Athanasius and not with Arius ; and it was a true instinct that led them, even though their motives may have been mixed, to reject a system which would have sacrificed the Divinity of their Redeemer.

What was the result ? “ The Emperor wrote happy and confident letters to all the Churches, in which he declared that the power of Satan had been thwarted ” (Du Bose). But his hopes were vain. The effect of an attempt to enforce uniformity of belief is either to stifle thought and encourage insincerity, or else to intensify divisions. In this case the latter effect was marked. Strife entered the Church such as she had never known, and political intrigue began to cloak itself under the mask of zeal for religion. It was the interest of each party to secure the Emperor’s favour, and the Arians especially bent their energies to this task. In a few years they gained their desire ; Athanasius, after having been appointed bishop of Alexandria, was driven out and banished ; his friends proved false to him, and, in the East, he was left almost alone. By 360, Arian bishops were in possession of most of the Eastern sees. The West, thanks largely to the seed sown by Tertullian, who had spoken of the “ Son,” rather than the “ Logos,” and whose thoughts centred more on salvation than on philosophy, was more ready to stand by him. After much confusion and vacillation the Nicene doctrines were re-affirmed in the second Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople in 381. By that time the vitality of Arianism was well-nigh exhausted

CHAPTER XVIII

NESTORIANISM AND THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS

The confusion which followed the Council of Nicæa, in which the Church defined its belief in the "essential Deity" of Christ as the Son of God, was thus described by the great Hilary of Poitiers, who himself took no mean share in checking the Arian reaction :

"We determine creeds by the year or by the month, we change our determinations, we prohibit our changes, we anathematise our prohibitions. Thus we either condemn others in our own persons, or ourselves in the instance of others, and while we bite and devour one another, are like to be consumed of one another."*

Trinitarian Terms. One of the causes of difficulty was ambiguity in the use of terms. The very words, on which the combatants relied to express with the utmost dogmatism the inexpressible nature of the Godhead, were understood in varying senses. The catchword "homo-ousios" implies that Christ is of identical "ousia" with God. But what is "ousia"? Properly *essence* or true nature; but it was translated into Latin as *substantia* (which has far too material a sound). The proper Greek equivalent for *substantia* is *hypostasis*, which at first was used (as in Heb. i. 3), instead of *ousia*, to express the Divine nature or essence. But gradually it was appropriated, as the only word available, to express *distinctions* within the Divine unity, and was translated into Latin as *persona*, the proper equivalent of the Greek *prosōpon*. Much was done during the fourth century towards settling the phraseology by Hilary himself, aided by the three great Cappadocian Fathers, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. They accomplished this in their efforts to counter

* Quoted by Du Bose, *Ecumenical Councils*, p. 175. A good account of Nestorianism will be found in this book, chapters x. and x. That in Workman (pp. 84-86) is quite inadequate.

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the opposite errors of Sabellianism and Arianism. The terms that ultimately became "orthodox" were that in God there is only one *ousia* or *substantia*, while there are three *hypostaseis* or *personæ*—Father, Son and Spirit. The inevitability of the whole discussion may be said to arise out of such Scriptural facts as that in John i. 1, a distinction is drawn between Θεός, which the Logos *is*, and ὁ Θεός, whom He is *with*; and that this implies distinction within the Divine unity. But it is extremely important to remember the history of this word *persona* when we speak of the "persons" of the Trinity. It never meant "person" in our sense of an individual apart from other individuals—an idea which the Greek language had no words to express. The nearest is πρόσωπον, which means a face or a mask, and so a *character* in a play. This was used by some Greeks for the "persons" of the Trinity, but was avoided by the most careful, on account of its Sabellian sound; that is, they felt the distinctions within the Divine unity to be *real*, and not mere appearances.

Though the Trinitarian discussion is not directly a matter of Christology, it dealt with questions which Christology inevitably opened, and apart from which it could not make progress. It is important to recognise that the questions at issue *really mattered*. It is easy for us, in disgust at the narrow intolerance of some, and weariness at the hair-splitting (as it seems to us) of nearly all, to wonder why they could not let these things be. One answer is that our spiritual life, in no small measure, depends on our "knowledge" (John xvii. 3) of Jesus Christ, and true knowledge of Him is hindered, as we shall see, by wrong theological theories about Him. We shall not get to know Him well if we read the gospels with our minds dominated by the idea, for instance, that He was only *in appearance* a man, or if we think of Him as two persons, Divine and human, in the guise of one.

It is impossible in these brief notes to give any idea of the profundity of thought, the vast intellectual power, and the depth of religious conviction and zeal for the truth, which were manifested in this conflict by men like Athanasius, Basil and the Gregories. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus both spent something like ten years in their

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youth studying philosophy at Athens, in preparation for their life work.

Incomplete Humanity of Christ : Apollinaris. While this discussion was proceeding, APOLLINARIS (Bishop of Laodicea in 362), who had been an ardent supporter of Athanasius and the formula of Nicæa, fell into the always easy error of so magnifying the Divine nature of Christ as to lose sight of His true humanity. What he was chiefly concerned to maintain was the *unity* of Christ's person as Divine. He accepted the view of Arius, that the human soul in Christ was replaced by the Logos—only, of course, the Logos for him was fully and absolutely Divine, that is to say, infallible, and not to be tempted with evil. He had come under the baneful influence of the idea that the human soul, being free, is necessarily sinful. At the same time he did really maintain that the Logos became man, only in a higher or transcendental sense of manhood: he reached the idea, which was great and true, that there is actually something *human* in God.* Man's true nature pre-existed in God; but only, he thought, in the sense of an archetypal or "heavenly man," in whose image our human nature was capable of being re-created. What he denied, in the interest of the unity of Christ's person, was that He had taken upon Him our nature with its weakness and limitation. The "catholic" writers, especially Gregory of Nazianzus, replied to this that it empties redemption of real meaning; for "*that which Christ did not take upon Himself He did not heal.*"

The Creed known as the "Nicene," which (perhaps wrongly, as we have seen†) was attributed to the Council of Constantinople in 381, attempted to meet the "heresy" of Apollinaris by expanding the allusions to the human life and sufferings of Christ, contained in the real Nicene formula, and added a passage that the Holy Spirit is "the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father,‡ who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified."

* "Apollinaris was perhaps the greatest of those who taught an incomplete humanity of our Lord" (Du Bose, p. 188).

† See above, p. 114, note.

‡ The Western Church added later the words "and the Son," which became one of the causes of separation between the West and East.

NESTORIANISM

Nestorianism.—The Church at Antioch has the honour of having produced the greatest teachers of the complete humanity of Christ—which not only Apollinaris, but most of the leaders who were reputed as orthodox or catholic, had imperfectly apprehended. Its noblest representative is THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA (350-428).^{*} He was a pupil of Diodorus of Tarsus, and like his teacher, was a great exponent of Scripture. The leading characteristic of the school of Antioch was to interpret the Bible in its plain common-sense meaning : to discover what the writers really meant, and not how much meaning can be read into their words. In this and other respects it was at the opposite pole from the school of Alexandria, which, as we have seen in the case of Clement and Origen, carried the mystical or allegorical method to fantastic extremes. Theodore was an enlightened Biblical critic ; he took quite a “modern” view of such books as Job and the Song of Solomon, and saw clearly that John xxi. is an appendix to the Gospel.

In accordance with this sober view, the Antiochenes fixed their attention on the picture of the human Jesus, and would not have it explained away. They also took quite literally the strong assertions in Hebrews that Jesus was really tempted. This conviction of the true and complete humanity of Christ dominated their thoughts about Him, and made them strong opponents of Docetism in every form. It is noteworthy that Theodore was never condemned for heresy. He held, with Athanasius, the essential Deity of Christ, and explained that the two natures, Divine and human, were united in a single Person. But he could not satisfactorily explain the unity of the Person on spiritual and moral lines only. His favourite metaphor was that of the union of man and wife—no longer two but one. Hence his Christology is somewhat of the Adoptionist type : the Incarnation means for him that the Logos took possession of the man Jesus and led Him on to perfection. He does not really succeed in excluding a certain *doubleness* from the person of Christ.

In the year 428, when Theodore died, his follower NESTORIUS, a man of far inferior ability, was given the high

^{*} For Theodore and the School of Antioch see Allin, *The Augustinian Revolution in Theology*, Part I.

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position of bishop of Constantinople, as successor to the great preacher Chrysostom, who was also of the Antiochene school. This aroused the jealous wrath of CYRIL, bishop of Alexandria, who determined to compass the ruin of his rival. Nestorius was a man of little tact, and to him Cyril and most of the "catholic" school of thought appeared pure Apollinarians. He gave a handle to Cyril by declaiming against the common ascription to the Virgin Mary of the title *Theotokos*, "Mother of God," which Theodore had also disputed. This word became the battle-ground of a fierce controversy. Nestorius affirmed that all we can rightly infer from Scripture is that Mary is the mother of *Christ*—a man who was "accompanied by the Logos." He was not a very clear thinker, and could not grasp the distinction between a Divine person and the Godhead itself. The Antiochene doctrine, while it had the great merit of bringing out in strong relief the real humanity of Jesus, failed in emphasising the unity of His person; the "catholic" doctrine did just the opposite. The time was not come—perhaps it has not come yet—when anyone could quite clearly unite the two ideas.

The Council of Ephesus.—The character of Cyril of Alexandria—bigoted, ambitious, unscrupulous—is portrayed in Kingsley's *Hypatia*. (How far he was really responsible for the brutal murder of that beautiful teacher of Neo-platonism is not known.) Determined to ruin Nestorius, he appealed to Celestine, bishop of Rome, who took his side, Rome thus adhering to her traditional alliance with Alexandria. Nestorius was condemned at Rome, and declared a heretic by a synod called by Cyril at Alexandria, where twelve "anathemas" against him were published. Nestorius replied by twelve counter anathemas. The Emperor was persuaded to call a General Council at *Ephesus* in 431. The proceedings were violent. Cyril had exhausted the arts of political pressure and bribery to gain his end, and was helped by the non-appearance, till the Council was nearly over, of John of Antioch and the Syrian bishops, who had been delayed by bad weather. Nestorius was excommunicated, deposed, and banished, and died in exile a few years later.

It would be hard to exaggerate the harm done to the

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Church by the narrow bigotry of Cyril—a man who was capable of better things. It is probable that Nestorius did not really hold the views that Cyril attributed to him ; but he was roused and driven to extremes. The whole quarrel could have been settled if a Christian spirit had prevailed. “ If Antioch and Alexandria could have been kept from the bitterness and blindness of controversy, they might soon have coalesced in the common faith, with no other difference than that of wholesomely and helpfully occupying opposite and complementary points of view, each professing to hold the truth of the other ” (Du Bose).

Though Nestorius was banished, and his (supposed) doctrines condemned as heresy, the followers of Theodore spread their faith far and wide beyond the eastern confines of the Roman Empire. Never were missionaries more zealous than they. In the highlands of Armenia, in the valley of the Euphrates, in Persia and Turkestan, in India and Ceylon, and even in China, Nestorian churches were established, some of which, especially in Southern India, last to this day. As late as the thirteenth century there are said to have been as many as twenty-five metropolitan sees in the Nestorian Church.

The one valuable truth affirmed by the Church in the Council of Ephesus, 431, was the impossibility of admitting a *double* personality (Divine and human) in our Lord. The length to which this led, in the denial of His real humanity, and the efforts made to repair the mischief that had been done by Cyril, will occupy us in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

MONOPHYSITISM AND THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

More "Docetism." The condemnation, by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., of the "Nestorianism" which seemed to divide the person of Christ, left the way open for an outbreak of what was virtually Docetism. Cyril himself, in his arguments against Nestorius, had already slipped over the perilous knife-edge on to the Docetist side. While he believed himself to accept fully the idea of Divine humiliation or "Kenosis" involved in the Incarnation, yet the man with whom the Logos united Himself in Jesus was very far, in his view, from being a real man such as ourselves. His human nature was so absorbed in that of the Logos, that there was very little of it left. It was only *in appearance* that Jesus grew in wisdom as well as stature; He only *usefully pretended* to be ignorant of the day of judgment. "For since He clothed Himself with our flesh, He *affected* to have put on the fashion of our ignorance."*

Cyril started with the idea of the blending of two "natures," Divine and human, in the person of Christ; but the human was swallowed up and lost in the Divine, so that in effect His nature was single. This is the meaning of the term "*Monophysite*" (from *μόνη φύσις*, "single nature"), which was afterwards applied to those who held this view. Cyril's own views seem to have mellowed somewhat with age; in fact he effected a compromise with John of Antioch in 433; but after his death in 444 his ideas were much more violently expressed by his nephew and successor *Dioscurus* at Alexandria (a man who seems to have combined all his faults with none of his virtues), and by a monk named *Eutyches* at Constantinople. The

* For this and many other actual quotations from Cyril see Bruce, *Humiliation of Christ*, pp. 366-372.

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latter, condemned by a synod of bishops there, appealed to LEO I., who was now bishop of Rome. Recognising the importance of the matter at issue, Leo replied in a very weighty letter addressed to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, which is known as "Leo's Tome," and of which we shall have more to say.

Meanwhile, Dioscurus persuaded the Emperor to summon another Council at Ephesus, which met in 449, and which, from the outrageous character of its proceedings, became known as the Latrocinium or "Robber Council." After scenes of the wildest disorder and violence, Eutyches was pronounced orthodox, and Flavian and several bishops of the Antiochene school were deposed. Flavian himself was mobbed by the monks, and very soon died of the injuries he received. Leo's letter to Flavian was never even read by Dioscurus, who presided, though Rome was the traditional ally of Alexandria; and the violence of Dioscurus carried him so far that at last he pronounced excommunication against Leo himself—a sentence which, of course, he had no means of enforcing.

The disgrace of the "Robber Council" burned itself into Leo's soul, and he set himself to undo, so far as possible, the grievous wrong that had been done. Fortunately the Emperor, whose favour Dioscurus had procured, died at this juncture, and his successor was amenable to reason. Leo persuaded him to summon a fourth General Council of the Church, which met at Chalcedon in 451, and was attended by over 600 bishops.

This is the great COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON, which practically concluded the work of defining the Christology of the Church, and at the same time greatly extended the power of the Roman bishop. For its conclusions were, in the main, a summary of Leo's letter to Flavian, though his legates at the Council asked for no new definition of the faith. Both Eutyches and Dioscurus were condemned and excommunicated.

Leo's Tome. This great letter, which dominated the proceedings of Chalcedon, is marked by the best characteristics of the Roman genius—broad, practical, statesman-like, but without any clear perception of the fine intellectual distinctions that were so dear to the Greek mind. It is

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couched in a tone of great authority, as though the writer were already the acknowledged head of the whole Church. Leo views the true faith as a *via media* between the opposing errors of Nestorianism and Monophysitism; and, without entering upon controversy, brings out what is true in both—setting down the complementary aspects side by side, without any attempt to show their logical coherence. The great merit of his treatment is that he recognises fully and adequately, in words at least, at once the Divine and the human sides of Christ's person. "God so became man that each nature and substance preserved its distinctive characteristics, while both were conjoined in one person." "The true God was born in the entire nature of a true man: He was *totus in suis, totus in nostris*." Leo makes no attempt to explain how this could be; he is content to point to Christ's birth, infancy, hunger, thirst, weariness and sleep as showing His entire humanity, and to His miracles as showing His full Divinity. He never touches the crucial question of Christ's human knowledge, which Cyril had wrestled with and failed. In fact, the nature of Christ's *self-conscious personality*, which is really vital, he leaves alone—probably no one at that time thought of it as we do, or realised its importance.

The Creed of Chalcedon, as has been said, is an epitome of Leo's letter. For the first time it lays down explicitly that Christ is *ὁμοούσιος*, "of the same nature," with man, just as much as He is with God. He is "true God and at the same time truly man, of a reasonable soul and body" (this against Apollinaris). He is "begotten of the Father according to His Godhead; and also in these latter days, on account of us and of our salvation, of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God (this against Nestorius), according to His Manhood." He is "to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, change (Eutyches), division, or separation (Nestorius); the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union; but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person (*πρόσωπον*) and one subsistence (*ὑπόστασις**), not parted or divided into two persons (*πρόσωπα*), but one and the same Son." (This, again, against Nestorius).

* Note that *both* the Greek words translated by *persona* are here used.

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Briefly, then, the final word of the Church was that in Christ two "natures," Divine and human, were united in a single "person," who was therefore at once fully God and perfectly man. How this could be, or how we should apply it when we ask particular questions about Jesus, as we must ask if we wish to understand the Gospels—how much He knew, how He really felt in the presence of temptation, whether He felt Himself absolutely dependent on God as we do—is never explained. Probably no explanation was then possible. The mind of the Church had been occupied so long over an anatomical dissection of the person of her Lord, that His living character had faded from view.

What the Church succeeded in doing—and in this, it seems to us, the hand of a Divine providence can be traced, guiding her, through all the wrath and ambition and persecuting bigotry of men, to a real and solid achievement—was, not to throw a search-light upon the mystery of Christ's person, but to set up danger signals along the track of human thought, like the buoys that mark the deep water for an ocean liner putting out to sea. None of the competing systems of theology were deep enough to float her safely. At Nicæa (325) the Church set up a warning against the Arian demi-god Christ; at Constantinople (381) against the Apollinarian fiction of a Christ without a human soul; at Ephesus (431) against the Nestorian confusion of a Christ who was two persons under the guise of one; and now at Chalcedon (451) against the subtle Eutychian snare of the loss by fusion of His humanity in His Divinity. The first and third Councils guarded the Church against shipwreck on the right-hand sandbank of obscuring the true divinity of Christ; the second and fourth against disaster on the left-hand and still more dangerous quicksand of ignoring His true humanity. The Church, by devious paths indeed, was led finally to declare that no doctrine will meet its needs—that is, the deepest needs of the human soul for salvation from sin and union with God—which sacrifices either the real divinity or the perfect humanity of her Lord and Redeemer. It did not build up a satisfying Christology; but it showed on what broad and deep foundations such a doctrine can alone be built.

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The immediate effect of this important and valuable decision was almost to shatter the Church. The Monophysites never accepted it, and became more powerful afterwards than they were before. Their disaffection, in later centuries, had much to do with the overthrow of Christianity, in large portions of the Eastern world, by the sword of Mohammed. To this day they survive, in the degraded forms of Christianity which we see in the Copts of Egypt, the Abyssinians, and the Maronites of Syria; and, more worthily, in the Gregorian Church of Armenia.

But, within the "orthodox" Church also, practical Monophysitism remained and is with us still. The difficulty and apparent contradiction involved in the theory of "two natures in one person" has always left the way open for an easy simplification of the problem, which also seems to honour Christ—that of ignoring the human nature and attending only to the Divine. It is reaction against this that explains the spread of Adoptionism in Spain and France towards the close of the eighth century, which revived many of the older controversies of Antioch against Alexandria. The theology which ruled the Church of the Middle Ages, as we see it in Thomas Aquinas, and even in the followers of Luther, is to a large extent unconsciously Monophysite. (See Bruce, *Humiliation of Christ*, pp. 80, 106ff.) While nominally holding the humanity of Jesus, it gives us no real man. Even to-day it comes as an unwelcome shock to many Christians who believe themselves nothing if not orthodox, to hear Jesus Christ spoken of as a man growing in knowledge, wrestling with temptation, dependent on God like ourselves. The path to a truer Christology will be found in a clearer understanding of the human personality of Jesus, and in a sounder psychology of human nature than was known to the early Fathers of the Church.

Meanwhile two thoughts may be put on record here, which we may be able to develop later. First, those Christians in the early centuries approached nearest to a solution who, like Irenæus, treated the problem on *ethical* rather than metaphysical lines: as one of the union of *characters*, by self-sacrificing love, and not of "natures" regarded as metaphysical entities. Second, they caught a glimpse of the real answer in so far as, like some of the

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Adoptionists, they found in Christ a revelation of what man can be as well as of what God is : of what man must be and do, to reveal God, as well as of what God must be if He reveals Himself in man. In other words, the problem cannot be solved on hard individualist lines, by thinking of Christ as an individual among other individuals, and wholly external to those He came to save. We must learn to think of Him as identified with us all in our weakness ; as not only *a man*, but *Man* in his true relation to God ; as the better self which each one of us, by union with Him, has it in himself to be. “ I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

CHAPTER XX

THE RISE OF CRITICISM

We have now traced, in broad outline, the process by which the Christian Church attempted, and failed, to secure unity by defining in precise terms the "orthodox" belief, and ruling out as "heretics" all who differed from it. The formula of Chalcedon, which attributed to Jesus Christ "two natures" united in "one person," was never improved upon, and remains to this day the orthodox definition.

The "Athanasian Creed."—This is the best point at which to allude to the more ambitious formula which begins in Latin "*Quicumque vult*," and is commonly known as the Athanasian Creed, though it has nothing to do with Athanasius.* It is now believed to have been composed about 450 A.D., in France, and it was in France and Spain that it was first accepted as authoritative. The actual author is unknown. While in some respects it is a beautiful and stately expression of the beliefs that then held sway, it is greatly marred by its dogmatic preface and conclusion, which make human salvation depend on its acceptance, and by the over-elaboration of its attempts to define the indefinable.

"He [Jesus Christ] is God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds, and He is man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God, perfect man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father according to His divinity, less than the Father according to His humanity. Who, though he be God and man, is yet not two, but one Christ; one, however, not by conversion of the divinity in the flesh, but by assumption of the humanity into God: one altogether, not by confusion or substance, but by unity of person. For, as a rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one

* For this see Curtis, *History of Creeds and Confessions*, pp. 82-89.

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Christ. . . . This is the catholic faith, which except a man have faithfully and firmly believed, he shall not be able to be saved."

The Creeds and their greatest weakness.—Are the Creeds of the fourth and fifth centuries a sufficient expression, or even a satisfactory adumbration, of the great realities on which Christian faith depends? There is to-day a very widespread conviction, among many of the most thoughtful and loyal Christians, in all countries, that they are not; and this for the reason that they have very largely ignored the one central fact that alone gives them meaning and value: the personality or character of the man Jesus of Nazareth. Dr. A. E. Garvie says:—

"An inadequate conception of personality in God and man made the framers of the symbol incapable of thinking the personal unity of both God and man in Christ. It is in the very factors which the creeds ignore in the earthly life of Jesus that the solution of the problem lies The historical reality of the earthly ministry of Jesus, and the grace and truth therein manifested, are not only unmentioned in the creeds, but the Christological controversies show that the living image of Jesus was not present to Christian thought; and thus, while the completeness of the humanity was asserted in abstract terms, it was not so concretely realised as to prevent [the thought of] an actual absorption of the humanity in the divinity. To-day, on the contrary, it is this historical reality of the earthly ministry which is the starting-point of most modern thinking, which, therefore, demands a Christology that will do full justice, not to an abstract humanity, but to a concrete manhood of Jesus Christ."*

The Rise of Criticism.—For the recovery of interest in, and appreciation of, the human character of Jesus we are mainly indebted to the Critical movement, which is a by-product of the Reformation and of the freedom of thought and enquiry which it brought. In the nature of things the movement was inevitably to a very large extent unorthodox; in part it was animated by bitter hostility to historic Christianity. But, even where it was most hostile, it

* *The Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Creeds*: articles in the "Expository Times," May to July, 1912, pp. 416, 449.

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aroused the orthodox to search into the foundations of their beliefs, and to study afresh for themselves their New Testament *data* ; and, to a considerable extent, it was the product of a genuine desire to purify Christian belief from false ecclesiastical accretions. We will touch on the following aspects of it :

1. The Unitarianism of Servetus and Socinus.
2. The Deist movement in England, and the " Aufklärung " in Germany.
3. Historical criticism of the New Testament, especially in Germany.

1. MICHAEL SERVETUS (put to death as a heretic by Calvin in 1553) was the leader of an anti-trinitarian movement based on a Sabellian and even pantheistic thought of God, of whose substance the human Christ was the expression—as indeed were, in measure, all other human souls. He therefore, of course, denied any duality of " natures " in Christ. The position of Servetus was mystical and Neoplatonic ; and, though he (rather inconsistently) held to the supernatural birth and personal sinlessness of Jesus, his fundamental view of God is non-ethical and impersonal, and the thought of *love* is absent.

LÆLIUS SOCINUS (d. 1562) and his nephew FAUSTUS SOCINUS (d. 1604), whose influence was chiefly exercised in northern Italy and in Poland, were entirely opposed to the mysticism of Servetus, and found in Christ simply the perfect man and teacher who taught the way to eternal life through obedience to the will of God.* They held strongly to free-will, in opposition to the dominant predestinarian views of the Reformers, and to the moral ability of man to fulfil the Divine will. Revelation was necessary, and had been given to men in the Bible and in the life of Christ—but it was revelation of the way of obedience and nothing more. Still, this made them diligent students of the New Testament. The Church learned much from their common-sense interpretation of the Gospels, but the mysticism of Paul and John was quite beyond their understanding. They accepted the miracles, including the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection ; but rejected the idea

* For the Socinians, see McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, pp. 107-118.

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of any real pre-existence of Christ, and therefore of an Incarnation in the true sense. Their view of God, as Ottley points out (p. 545), is limited by the idea of a necessary opposition between the infinite and the finite, and by an imperfect conception of *love* as the link that binds them together.

2. The DEIST movement in England is associated with such names as those of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the philosopher John Locke, John Toland (author of *Christianity not Mysterior*, 1696), and Matthew Tindal (*Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 1730).

The essence of Deism is an assurance of the competence of Reason to deal satisfactorily and sufficiently with Divine matters. God is for the Deist an object of thought just as the world is, and can be understood and reasoned about in the same way. The two objects, God and the world, stand over against one another in thought, just as two other separated things might do. Deism is therefore at the opposite pole from pantheism and mysticism, which regard God as *immanent* in nature, or man, or both, and can never express themselves in the logical terms of mutual exclusion.

What has all this to do with Christology? Well, the Christian Deists set themselves the task of rationalising Christianity, by purifying it of its unreasonable features. This took them back to the sources, that they might find it in its simplicity, and so they studied the New Testament—interpreting it in a rather hard, cold, unspiritual way. The following passage is nearly all we have room for to indicate their method of thought:

“In his little book *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), Locke applied the general principles laid down in the fourth book of his *Essay on the Human Understanding* to the Christian system, and undertook to show that it is both rational and adequately attested. He recognised that there was much in traditional Christianity contrary to sound reason, and he therefore examined the Scriptures in considerable detail, to discover the essence of Christianity as taught by Christ and His apostles. He found that they set forth only two conditions of salvation: the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, and a righteous life.

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‘ These two, faith and repentance, that is, believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensable conditions of the new covenant to be performed by all those who would obtain eternal life.’ To one who believes in Jesus as the Messiah, and tries to live as he should, his faith will be graciously reckoned for righteousness, and allowed to make up for the imperfections of his conduct. All this, according to Locke, is eminently rational. Viewed in this way, as Christ Himself and His apostles understood it, Christianity contains nothing inconsistent with reason, and, moreover, it is positively attested by miracles. Thus it fully meets the requirements of a true revelation.”*

The Christian Deists were therefore strong moralists, because the virtuous life is the only rational one—since it alone leads to eternal happiness. The later Deists were mostly anti-Christian, especially Hume and Voltaire, and trenchantly attacked the evidence from miracles on which the earlier Deists had relied. One result of their attack was to drive the orthodox defenders of Christianity to a more careful study of its New Testament sources. And the fact that Hume ended in entire scepticism shook the naïve confidence which many of the Deists had felt in Reason, and led to a wholly new start in philosophic thinking being made by the idealists Kant and Hegel.

The widespread movement in Germany known as the *Aufklärung* or “ Illumination ” (later eighteenth century) was similar in character, and owed much to the English Deists. So far as it concerned itself with Christianity, its main object was to rationalise it by getting rid of the supernatural. The greatest name in this connection is that of REIMARUS of Hamburg. The purpose of Jesus was, he argued, to set up the Kingdom of God in the outward sense that the Jews expected, and to rule as the Son of David. When this purpose was defeated by the Crucifixion, His disciples stole His body, and pretended that He had risen from the dead and would come again from heaven as the Apocalyptic “ Son of Man.” A further stage is marked by PAULUS, of Heidelberg, who, while equally violent and unhistorical in his attempts to rational-

* McGiffert, *Protestant Thought before Kant*, pp. 205, 206.

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ise the supernatural elements in Christianity, shows a truer appreciation of the power and beauty of Christ's human character.

3. It was from such unpromising beginnings that the great movement of *German Historical Criticism* sprang. "The greatest achievement of German theology," says Schweitzer, "is the investigation of the life of Christ. . . . Before Reimarus, no one had sought to apprehend the life of Christ historically."* The great philosophers, Kant and Hegel, attempted to work in the ideas of Christianity into their philosophical systems; but with them, as with the Gnostics of old, *ideas* held the first place, and historical facts were of relatively minor importance. A great historical controversy was, however, initiated by Strauss and Baur, who both began their work from the standpoint of Hegel's philosophy.

DAVID F. STRAUSS (1808-1874)† recognised the failure of Reimarus and Paulus to explain on naturalistic grounds the miraculous element in Christianity, and boldly resolved it all into myth. He did not deny the idea of an Incarnation, but understood it as an incarnation of God in the human race and not in an individual; and he ended by throwing over Christianity altogether.‡

FERDINAND C. BAUR, the founder of the great Tübingen school of historical criticism, took a very different line. He saw clearly that the historical basis of Christianity is the actual person, Jesus Christ; but held that His person and work can only be understood after a thorough-going criticism and re-valuation of the New Testament documents. This he undertook, starting from the view of a radical opposition between the ideas of Paul, the second great founder of historical Christianity, and those of the elder apostles of Jesus. His method was somewhat arbitrary, and his conclusions have not stood the test of more thorough-going enquiry; but "to Baur we owe the now universal recognition of the fact that the historical

* *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, pp. 1, 13.

† For this section see La Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*, pp. 60-150.

‡ See Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, pp. 61-63.

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circumstances of the early days of Christian history must be given their due weight in the interpretation of Christianity.”*

Space fails us to speak of the work done along these lines by men like Pfeiderer, Jülicher, and Harnack in Germany, by Renan, Réville and Auguste Sabatier in France, and in our own country, in a more conservative direction, by such scholars as Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort and others. Broadly, the result of the most careful historical enquiry has been to bring into ever-increasing prominence the personality of Jesus, and His consciousness of a unique relation both to God and to men, as the centre of His Gospel, and the foundation of any valid Christology.

* La Touche, p. 67.

CHAPTER XXI

MODERN KENOTIC THEORIES *

We have seen how the Deistic revolt against the seeming irrationality of orthodox Christian doctrine led to the historical criticism of the New Testament, and how the most important result of that Criticism has been the recovery of a real insight into the human personality of Jesus of Nazareth, which the Creeds, with their metaphysical definitions, had seriously obscured.

The tendency of the Christian Deists was to dwell mainly on the life and teaching of Jesus as presented in the Synoptic Gospels, and to undervalue the *ideas* about Him contained in the Pauline and Johannine writings. Their thought has some resemblance to the *Ebionism* of the earliest days of Christianity. And just as Ebionism found its opposite in Gnosticism, so, in reaction against Deism, we have the idealistic philosophy of Kant and Hegel, in which the *ideas* of Christianity are emphasised, while the *facts* are regarded as relatively unimportant. The ablest representative of this school in England was the late Prof. T. H. Green, of Oxford, whose sermons, *The Witness of God* and *Faith*†, are full of the living spirit of Pauline Christianity, while his thoughts about the historical Jesus were dominated by the negative criticism of Strauss and Baur.

* For this section see Bruce, *The Humiliation of Christ*, especially Lectures I. and IV. A shorter but clear and useful statement will be found in La Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*, pp. 349-372.

† Published as a small volume by Longmans, 1886; also in his *Works*, Vol. III., pp. 230-276. His views were popularised by Mrs. Humphry Ward in *Robert Elsmere*, where "Henry Grey" stands for T. H. Green. A similar position to that of Green is taken to-day by Dr. K. C. Anderson, who appears to think that the ideas of Christianity will survive in full efficacy, even if the historic Jesus has to be relegated to the realms of myth.

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It was inevitable that attempts should be made by earnest Christian thinkers, whose minds were awake to the facts disclosed by critical study, to reunite with those facts the ideas of Christian faith. This was done along two main lines, one mainly speculative, the other predominantly ethical and spiritual—Germany, as usual, taking the lead. The first of these we shall now consider, leaving the second till the next chapter. They are :—

1. The “ Kenotic ” theories of Thomasius, Gess, and others.
2. The new movement of religious thought introduced by Schleiermacher and Ritschl.

1. *Kenoticism*.—The great question with which the Kenotic thinkers set themselves to grapple was this : If Jesus Christ was a real man, limited, growing, developing like ourselves, how was He at the same time the Eternal Son or Word of God ? These men believed themselves to be wholly orthodox, and started with the ideas about the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ embodied in the Creeds. The problem for them may therefore be stated thus : How could a Being, who, it was assumed, was in some sense one with the Infinite God, take upon Him the actual limitations of finite manhood, sin alone excepted ? Accepting as literal truth the Johannine expression, “ The Word became flesh,” they found the answer in Paul’s thought of “ self-emptying ” (*Kenosis*) in Phil. ii. 6 (*ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε*), and concluded that the Logos, in becoming man, actually stripped Himself, for the time, of some or all of His Divine attributes.

The father of this line of thought was the Moravian, ZINZENDORF, who used the strongest possible terms of the real humanity of Christ—questioning whether He ever thought of Himself as Divine—and concluded that, the more absolutely human He was conceived to be, the greater was the Divine love and self-sacrifice that was manifested in the Incarnation. The Kenotic doctrine always has a powerful attraction for religious minds, because it magnifies the Divine love shown in the humiliation of Christ ; and it is at the same time able to accept the findings of careful historical study without alarm lest the Divine Christ should disappear. It is impossible therefore not to recognise in

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it a large measure at once of truth and of religious value.*

But when it claims to be orthodox in the sense of the Creeds, and to explain how these can be reconciled with the facts, it is landed at once in a wilderness of speculative questions which it can only very imperfectly answer. The various "Kenotic theories" are different attempts to grapple with these problems, the nature of which we can here only faintly indicate.

"The dominant idea of the Kenotic Christology is that, in becoming incarnate, and in order to make the Incarnation in its actual historical form possible, the eternal pre-existent Logos reduced Himself to the rank and measures of humanity."† Yes; but the speculative mind feels itself driven to ask: if the Divine Logos reduced Himself to man's dimensions, did He at the same time remain Divine—and if so, how? This was answered by THOMASIUS (1802-1875) by making a distinction between the *essential* and the *relative* attributes of the Divine. The *essential* attributes of God, he said, are such as love and holiness; the *relative* are such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. It was the latter qualities that the Logos laid aside, in associating Himself with the human soul of Jesus, that He might the more fully exhibit the former. God is not less God, but more, if out of pure love and self-sacrifice He (in the person of the Logos) strips Himself of some of His external attributes in order to reveal to men that which He essentially is.

The chief difficulty of Thomasius's theory is that it does not escape a certain duality between the self-emptied Logos and the human soul which He "assumed," or with which He "associated Himself" in Jesus. The doctrine, so stated, is open to many of the objections urged against the orthodox formula of two "natures" united in one "person." An attempt to meet this difficulty was made by Gess (1819-1891), who held that the distinction made by Thomasius between essential and relative attributes could not be maintained, and that Christ in becoming man put off for a time *all* the Divine attributes, so far as these differ

* All orthodox Christology that professes to find room for a normal human development of the person of Jesus is necessarily "Kenotic" in some degree, and this has been recognised by many of the greatest Christian thinkers from the earliest days. (See Bruce, p. 167.)

† Bruce, pp. 136, 137.

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from those of a perfect man ; in other words, He gave up absolutely all consciousness of being God, in order that He might be made perfectly "like unto His brethren."* He was, in fact, for a season, changed from being God into being a man. His Logos nature was not destroyed ; it remained there all the time, but in a quiescent or dormant condition, until it gradually reawakened as Jesus realised more and more who and what He was ; and after death, when released from the flesh, it resumed its full glory. That is to say, Gess held that God in the person of the Logos, out of love for men and by an act of holy will, extinguished for a time His own Divine consciousness and became a simple human soul. Objection has been made to this theory on the ground that it represents the "Kenosis" as a kind of Divine suicide.

A third form of the theory was elaborated by MARTENSEN, a distinguished Danish theologian, who suggested the possibility of a *double* life of the Logos, in which on the one hand He continued to be the world-mediator of a Divine revelation (dim and partial) to all men, and on the other reduced His Divine qualities to the measure of a true human soul, in whom that revelation was for the first time fully and completely brought to men. The objection that this makes the Logos two Persons at once—or, if not, involves the contradiction that the same Person is at once conscious and unconscious, finite and infinite, ignorant and omniscient—Martensen attempts to meet, without full success.

In association with the various Kenotic theories, we may notice the view of DORNER (1809-1884), who, in his great *History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, worked out the very difficult view of a *gradual* Incarnation. The Divine revealing Logos does not by one act in time "empty Himself" so as to become an unconscious human infant ; but He gradually penetrates with Himself the human soul of Jesus, as the latter advances in mental and moral stature, gaining power both to appropriate and to be appropriated. Only after the Resurrection does the union of the Divine with the human in Him become complete and absolute. This view appears to resemble, in some respects, the Adop-

* Heb. ii. 17. The whole passage, chap. ii. 5-18, should be studied as one of the New Testament foundations of the Kenotic doctrine. Bruce has a fine exposition of it, pp. 25-35.

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tionist doctrines of earlier days ; but it does not, of course, deny the pre-existence of the Logos. For those who can grasp it, it doubtless has the merit of leaving full scope for the normal development of the human soul of Jesus, while not denying the truth that God, in love for men and to save them from sin, became incarnate in Him.

Now, what are we to say of these various attempts to explain in human language what the Incarnation really was ? None of them, as stated by their authors, is satisfactory, and all of them assume to know too much. Speculative theology is always liable to make this mistake : to play with words as counters, and to forget that it is the meaning alone that matters, and that the meaning is often very imperfectly known to us. What do we really know about the Divine nature, that we should fancy we can frame a theory as to the manner in which " the Logos became flesh " ? A certain agnostic reserve in treating of these high themes is called for by Christian reverence.

" One may well be excused for assuming an attitude of suspended judgment, not merely in reference to the Kenotic theories, but towards all speculative schemes. The hypothesis of a double life, of a gradual Incarnation, and of a depotentiated Logos, are all legitimate enough as tentative solutions of a hard problem ; and those who require their aid may use any one of them as a prop around which faith may twine. But it is not necessary to adopt any of them ; we are not obliged to choose between them ; we may stand aloof from them all ; and it may be best when faith can afford to dispense with their services. For it is not good that the certainties of faith should lean too heavily upon uncertain and questionable theories."*

The merit of the Kenotic doctrines is that they were animated by a sincere desire to do justice to a double set of facts : the facts of historical enquiry, which assure us of the human personality of Jesus, and those of Christian experience, which have led to the confession of His Deity. In the next chapter we shall deal with the attempts of Schleiermacher and Ritschl to build up a Christology on the basis of those facts alone, without reliance on the Creeds of the early centuries.

* Bruce, pp. 190, 191.

CHAPTER XXII

SCHLEIERMACHER AND RITSCHL *

2. The "Kenotic" theories of Christ's person, dealt with in last chapter, were preceded by the works of SCHLEIERMACHER (1768-1834), which were "epoch-making" in the sense that he was the first in modern times to base Christian doctrine directly on personal Christian experience. Instead of starting with the orthodox thought of Christ as the Divine Logos, and endeavouring, with the Kenoticists, to fit this in with the facts of His real humanity re-discovered by critical study, Schleiermacher began at the other end—with the facts of the human life of Jesus and of the Christian experience into which He raised (and raises) His true disciples ; and he asked, What do these facts point to ? The line of thought is obviously more akin to the inductive methods of modern Science than to those of the speculative theology which had prevailed from the days of the Apologists downwards ; it is also historical, in the sense that it repeats the evolution of thought which we find in the New Testament. Schleiermacher himself, however, was neither a man of science nor a historian ; his mind was a curious blend of the Moravian piety in which he had been trained, and the pantheistic philosophy of Spinoza on

* Most of the expositions of Schleiermacher's views in English are to be found in chapters of larger books, such as Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine* (T. & T. Clark), pp. 502-511, and Pfleiderer's *Development of Theology since Kant* (Sonnenschein), pp. 44-56, and 103-130. There is an excellent chapter on both Schleiermacher and Ritschl in E. C. Moore's *History of Christian Thought since Kant* (Duckworth, 2s. 6d.), which should be read if possible. Of Ritschl the best English exponent is Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology* (T. & T. Clark). There is also a useful critical estimate of his thought in Orr's *Ritschlianism* (Hodder & Stoughton). Many of the root ideas of Ritschl are set forth with great power by his follower, Herrmann, in *The Communion of the Christian with God* (Williams & Norgate). Since the above was written, mention has been made to the writer of *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, by George Cross (1911), but he has not had the opportunity of consulting it.

which he had nourished his maturer years. He was appointed Professor of Theology at Berlin in 1810, and his greatest work, *The Christian Faith*, was published in 1821.

The two chief factors in Schleiermacher's thought are thus expressed by Fisher: "(i.) a deep appreciation of Christ as the Redeemer, a rare insight into His character and office among men; and (ii.) speculative difficulties [which we may ascribe largely to the influence of Spinoza] in conceiving of God as possessed of attributes of personality."

Christian faith, he urged, does not consist in the acceptance of any theories about Christ or God, but in piety. And the root of piety is *the feeling of absolute dependence*; in other words, the consciousness of God. *Christian* piety is that which recognises that the consciousness of God which the soul possesses is due to Jesus Christ; and it comes through the Church, as the society of those who receive impressions from Him. Christianity is then the feeling of absolute dependence in relation to Christ; and Christian theology is the statement of what is involved in this personal and collective experience.

Jesus is distinguished from other men, not by the mode of His entry into this world, but by the indwelling in Him of a perfect consciousness of God, which cannot be explained by the circumstances of His age. In all other men, the consciousness of God is weighed down and beclouded by sense and sin; He was sinless, not in the sense that He could not be tempted, but that He always overcame in the struggle: the God-consciousness in Him was unfailingly energetic, and this is "the proper being of God" in Him.

But His real "nature" was identical with that of the rest of humanity, and, as a true man, He was obliged to express Himself through national peculiarities and modes of thought. He was, however, much more than an example (*Vorbild*) to other men; He was the perfect Archetype (*Urbild*) of humanity, the absolutely Ideal Man. In Him the human race was perfected.

Salvation consists in the imparting, to men whose consciousness of God is dim and hindered by sense-consciousness, of the perfect and victorious God-consciousness which Christ alone possessed. "This effect

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is conditioned on the entering of the individual within the historically constituted sphere of the Saviour's influence, the community of the believers" (Fisher, p. 504). It is not that sin is at once and uniformly conquered ; but God looks on the believer not as he actually is but as he is in virtue of his relation to Christ—as he is ideally, and will be when the process which Christ has begun in him is complete. Christ has actually fulfilled the will of God, "not in our stead, but for our benefit."

As regards the Trinity (which he regarded as the "top-stone of Christian doctrine," and which he dealt with at the very end of his treatise), Schleiermacher put aside, as beyond our knowledge, hypostatic differences in the being of God Himself (an "immanent" Trinity) ; but he clearly stated his belief (i.) that God in His own proper nature was in Christ as the Redeemer, and (ii.) that God Himself is actually present in the "common Spirit" imparted by Christ to the collective life of believers, that is to say, in the Holy Spirit. In agreement with his whole method of thought, Schleiermacher confines his statement to the region of religious experience ; and so far he seems adequately to recognise the basis out of which the doctrine of the Trinity arose : acknowledgment of the real Divinity both of Christ and of the Holy Spirit.

Pfleiderer says (p. 122) that "the entire theology of the last half-century, so far as it seeks at all to remain in touch with critical thought, has been in some degree or other influenced by the theological system of Schleiermacher."

The chief weakness of that system lay in its identification of Faith with *Feeling*, which is subjective and variable. An advance was made by Ritschl, whose thought we must now consider.

ALBRECHT RITSCHL (1822-1889), who succeeded Dorner as Professor of Theology at Göttingen in 1864, and who in early life had followed many teachers without finding satisfaction, attempted nothing less than the entire reconstruction of theology on the basis of Christian experience. His greatest work, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, was first published in 1874. His design was, though he could not carry it out consistently, to exclude metaphysical philosophy altogether from

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Christian theology. He therefore threw over the orthodox formula of the "two natures in one person," and the Kenotic theories which had endeavoured to fit the Logos doctrine into the facts of the actual manhood of Jesus. While he owed much to Schleiermacher, he greatly disliked his "pietism," and his attempt to found Christian doctrine entirely on pure subjective feeling. He also rejected *in toto* what he called "mysticism," by which he meant the Neo-platonic absorption of the individual soul in God regarded as the universal existence. This, he believed, had come to dominate the thoughts of the Catholic mystics, and it seemed to him to make the historical revelation in Christ needless.

That historical revelation was his starting-point; and he attaches so much importance to it that (having abandoned the idea of the Logos) he seems at times almost to deny any knowledge of God in pre-Christian times or where Jesus is unknown. He will have nothing to do with "natural religion," or speculative proofs of the existence of God; the only God known to Christianity is the Father whom Christ revealed in His own life—the Father who is perfect love, and who reconciles men to Himself in Christ the founder of the Kingdom. His thought of God is much more positive and personal than that of Schleiermacher. The two ideas of "reconciliation" and "the Kingdom of God" are those around which his whole system of thought revolves. He complains of Schleiermacher's thoughts of redemption as too individualistic. It is not, he thinks, *as individuals* that God's love meets men in the first instance; "the consciousness of a new standing with God belongs first to the community, and is enjoyed by the individual only as he knows himself to be part of the body" (Orr, p. 48). This does not seem to accord very well with the experience recorded in the New Testament; but Ritschl's exegesis is often rather arbitrary.

What, now, of the Divinity of Christ? Ritschl's statements on this subject mark very strongly the revolution in religious thinking which he, more than anyone else, inaugurated. The confession of the Deity of Jesus is not, with him, a speculative statement, but what he calls a *Value-judgment* (*Werthurtheil*). It is an expression of what Jesus is *worth*, in personal and collective experience. Jesus

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reveals to us God in His own life : He does for us, and is to us, what only God can do and be : and so we rightly call Him God. This does not at all mean (as some have wrongly supposed) that Ritschl intended to suggest that Jesus was not really God, but that we usefully pretend that He was for purposes of edification ; nor that two opposite statements can be true at once, one in the region of metaphysical ideas, and the other in that of religious experience. What he means is that the only confession that is of *religious* significance is one that is based on the *worth* of Christ to us—not merely individually, but in the collective experience of the Church. *All* religious truth is, for him, of the nature of “ value-judgments ” : it is not something without practical significance for life and character and conduct ; it is based upon, and is intended to meet and satisfy, moral and spiritual needs. But it is not on that account any less *true* than the statements of the speculative reason which leave us cold ; it reaches a higher plane of knowledge, which the logical intellect alone cannot really touch.

To express it in more modern speech, religious truth is “ pragmatic ” in its quality—is concerned with action and practical needs : Ritschl did in the religious field what our modern Pragmatists are now doing for philosophy as a whole. And, without expressing here any opinion on the worth of their contribution to philosophic thinking, it seems safe to say that Ritschl has brought into the foreground what has always been a chief characteristic of really religious thought, and one that has been almost entirely obscured by speculative dogmatics. “ No man,” said Paul, “ can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit ” (1 Cor. xii. 3) : the confession, if it is to have religious significance, must be based on some degree of actual religious experience, on some sense of what Jesus is worth to the soul. Religious truth is for Ritschl much more of the nature of moral and æsthetic appreciation than it is like the bare statement of facts and “ laws ” with which Science deals. Just as, in order to discuss to any purpose the beauty of a picture, or the worth of a character, we must perceive for ourselves the beauty and worth, so the true theology, which deals with the highest of all values, must be saturated through and through with the perception

and experience of what they mean for the purposes of life.

Space fails us to deal with Ritschl's doctrine of Atonement, and to explain in what sense he accepted the pre-existence of Christ and His continued presence in the Church; we must also pass by the modifications of his thoughts in the theological work of his followers, such as Herrmann, Kaftan, Harnack and others. They all manifest an overpowering sense of what the personality of Jesus has meant for men, while they all, and especially Harnack, feel great freedom in dealing historically with the books of the New Testament. We may, however, venture in a few sentences to show how some of the leading principles brought out by Ritschl had been anticipated in Christian thought, especially by the "mystics" whom he despised, and in particular by the Quakers of the seventeenth century.

We noted how in the early centuries dislike of philosophy was widely felt in the Church, especially in the West, and finds expression in Irenæus and Tertullian.* A deep and wholesome instinct has at all times been present, especially in simple and saintly souls, that the chief condition of learning Christian truth is not ability in the use of intellectual analysis and argument, which are open only to the learned and acute, but the spirit of true discipleship, which is for all; and the "mystics" especially have stood for the thought that the unlearned are not shut up to the passive acceptance of statements on authority and tradition, but that to them too truth opens itself out in a first-hand experience of the things of God and Christ. As someone has said, "'I cannot understand, but I love' may indicate the path to the most genuine understanding of Christian mysteries." At the same time, it is right to recognise that "Christ" to Ritschl meant the Jesus of history, and that he was not prepared to give the same place that the Quakers gave to the Eternal Christ of faith and experience.

* See above, pp. 105, 107, 110.

CHAPTER XXIII

CHRISTOLOGY IN RELATION TO SCIENCE

This section seems to be needed if any attempt is to be made to bring Christology into relation with "Modern Thought"—that is to say, with a scientific conception of the world. To many modern minds, all the thought that has been devoted to this subject appears to be a waste of time, because it seems to have no connection whatever with verifiable facts. It is impossible, in the space available, to do more than offer a few hints showing that this is not necessarily the verdict of Science: that, on the contrary, Science, rightly understood, leaves room for, and requires to be supplemented by, Theology and Christology.*

Physical Science proceeds upon the assumption, which is continually verified in experience, that the world is *orderly* and not capricious: that is, that its happenings are not the outcome of a changeable will, or wills, but are bound to one another in causal sequences, known as "laws," which can be progressively ascertained. From its own point of view, Science therefore inevitably and rightly rejects the "Supernatural," if offered as an explanation of any particular facts. If, for instance, a planet does not move as astronomers calculate it ought to move, when all known forces are taken into account, Science could never rest satisfied with the explanation that a supernatural Being has intervened to push it out of its course; Science is bound to seek for a *physical* force which has been overlooked. This is not, of course, to say that Science can rightly deny the existence of God; it only means that God cannot be discovered by its methods. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John i. 18).

* There is no book known to the writer which exactly covers the ground of this section; but on the general subject of the relations between evolutionary science and Christian belief the student may be referred to J. R. Cohu's *Through Evolution to the Living God* (Oxford: Parker & Co., 3s. 6d. net.)

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Biology, in like manner, proceeds in the belief that the phenomena presented by living beings are the outcome of continuous "Evolution"; and it also, from its own standpoint, is right in rejecting Divine agency as an explanation of any particular set of facts. To say that a flower has a certain form because it was created so, is no explanation at all; the biologist is bound to seek for an understanding of the process by which it came to have that form. But he is not within his rights if, in the face of evidence to the contrary, he insists that the phenomena of life can all be explained by the laws which are found to regulate the behaviour of "dead" matter—in other words, that life can be reduced to mechanism. As Bergson and others have impressively shown, the kind of order which Life manifests can only be stated in terms which involve intelligent purpose.*

Psychology, again, which is really the study of conscious personality, is not within its rights if it uses the fact that a mechanical chain of cause and effect appears to rule in the outer world of "dead" matter, to deny the fundamental *datum* of human freedom. The idea of fixed Determinism will not really explain the facts of personality. A new kind of order, other than mechanical, and higher even than that manifested in vegetative and instinctive life, emerges when full conscious personality comes upon the scene.

It appears, then, unscientific to assume, as is too often done, that, because the world is found to be one of Order and Law, it is therefore to be regarded as an unbroken chain of mechanical causation—as a closed system, into which nothing new can ever enter. Biology and Psychology show us that Life—and still more *conscious* Life—brings into play new factors, new laws, of which mere physical science can give no account. The facts of life transcend mechanism; the facts of conscious intelligence and human freedom are unexplainable by the laws of vegetative and instinctive life.

* For instance, the favourable "variations" on which Natural Selection works are now widely believed to be not haphazard but *purposive* in their character. (Nominally, Bergson rejects what he calls "finalism"; but he only seems to mean that the end at which the Life-process is aiming is not fully mapped out beforehand, just as an artist or poet does not know beforehand what form his finished product will take.)

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Why should we stop here ? Is it not conceivable that in like manner the common *human* order may be transcended ? If the facts of the life of Jesus Christ, for instance, present features which seem unexplainable on the theory that He was *merely* a man like ourselves, is it really scientific to refuse to recognise such facts as real, on the *a priori* ground that no such transcendence of the human is possible ?

Surely we should be wrong in doing so on the ground that Evolution knows no breaks. If Bergson is right, the Life process is always creative—striving to bring new things into being which were not there before. Perhaps every *person* presents features that heredity and environment will never quite account for. That One should rise in human history who cannot be adequately explained by His antecedents and surroundings cannot be inconsistent with Evolution as we have learnt to know it.

Whether or not Jesus *was* more than human, it must (still speaking from the scientific standpoint) be for *History* to decide. But the history itself must be scientific : that is, as already hinted, it must be willing to examine *all* the facts, and not rule out, as *a priori* inadmissible, any that seem to transcend the common order. It will concentrate special attention on the personal self-consciousness of Jesus : on what He felt and believed Himself to be, in relation to God and men, so far as we can discover this from the earliest and most authentic data obtainable ; and, incidentally to this, it must, of course, subject the Gospel records to a process of historical and literary criticism. But, in addition (and recognising that even He may not have been fully conscious of all that was in Him), it will take account of the impression made by Jesus upon His contemporaries, especially His disciples, as this is reflected in the whole of the New Testament (and any other primitive documents that are extant) ; it will consider the effect of His personality upon their lives, and the grounds on which they came to think of Him as Divine ; it will, further, pay regard to the whole effect on human history of His person and His work. Nothing narrower than this can be regarded as scientific history.*

* See Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, chapters iv. and v., especially pages 118 to 127.

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All this is designed to show that Science (in its full meaning) must find a place for Christology, unless, without any *a priori* assumptions, it finds a purely humanitarian view of Jesus adequate to explain the facts. It is, however, vital to recognise what we owe to Schleiermacher and Ritschl for pointing out clearly that Christology did not arise out of Science but out of *religious experience*; it was facts of the inner life of people in reference to Jesus, as well as facts of His own life and words and work, which led them to confess Him as Divine. They felt that He had done for them what they believed that only God could do. And, unless the historian understands such facts through an inner sympathy with them, he is hardly better qualified to estimate their significance, or the value of the theories they give rise to, than a person with no power to appreciate pictures would be fitted to write a history of Art.

Is it possible that Science can do more than find a place for Christology? Can it throw any *positive* light on the mystery of the person of Jesus, and help us, in any measure, to conceive how in Him (as in no other) the human became the organ and expression of the Divine?*

The only branch of science that holds out any hope in this direction is *Psychology*. And it may be that the study of human personality, which is really only in its infancy, is destined to help us to clear up some things that without its aid must ever have remained obscure.

Two facts have been elucidated by modern psychology that are of great significance: first, that the *person*, which each one of us is, is much more extensive than our *consciousness*; and second, that personality is not isolated or atomistic, but essentially *conjunct*.

The Subconscious Life.—Some sixty years ago, Dr. W. B. Carpenter called attention to what he called “unconscious cerebration,” as a feature of mental life that had been largely ignored. He pointed out how Memory will often revive a thought that we have tried in vain to recall, while we are thinking of something quite different; and how problems that have baffled our conscious efforts often work themselves out to a solution either during sleep or while our conscious

* For this portion see Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, pp. 137-217; also his Supplement, *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves* (Clarendon Press).

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minds have been otherwise occupied. The attention that has been devoted, especially during the last thirty years, to the study of hypnotism, somnambulism, automatic writing, duplications of personality and other abnormal conditions, (by the Society for Psychical Research and many independent investigators), has shown that a large proportion of our actual mental life belongs to, and is carried on in, the subconscious region. Continual interchange between the conscious and subconscious goes on in forgetting and remembering ; and “uprushes” from the subconscious are constantly occurring, especially in persons of genius—complex ideas, and trains of thought, suddenly emerging into consciousness fully formed.* The subconscious region is the seat of *character* : what we are, and the way in which we shall act in new situations, depends upon the principles and habits we have acquired, and which have moulded us in the depths of our being.

Personality “conjunct.” It is becoming ever more clear that the self, which each one of us is, is never developed as an isolated unit, but only by the play of other selves upon it : that, in fact, an isolated *person* does not exist. Personality is not a thing given, but a thing that has to be achieved, by life in relation to other personalities.† And a very great part of this interaction of personalities, whereby the self comes to its own, takes place in the subconscious region, through “telepathic” and other influences that are unperceived. Further, it is increasingly recognised by psychologists that the most important factor in the development of the highest form of personality is found in communion with God as the Universal Spirit who *is* all that we are capable of *becoming*. And the seat of this communion, also, is very largely in the subconscious region.‡

What is the bearing of all this on Christology ? Well,

* The late Dr. George Matheson stated that he wrote down his beautiful hymn, “O Love that will not let me go,” in five minutes without conscious effort.

† See Rufus M. Jones, *Social Law in the Spiritual World*, passim.

‡ It is a helpful and suggestive thought that this is why we are normally unconscious of receiving answers to prayer. (See Sanday, *Personality*, p. 41.) The phenomena of “conversion” and other forms of religious experience are probably often due to the “uprush” into consciousness of that which has been going on below the surface.

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if our normal human personality thus stretches away behind the veil of the "seen" or conscious into the dim background, and there fuses with other personalities and with the Universal Person whom we call the Father of our spirits, must it not have been the same with the Person of Jesus Christ? Must there not have been much in His real "nature" that did not appear to others, and of which He Himself was only dimly and fitfully conscious? May there not have been a unique relation, in the abysmal depths of His personality, at once to God and to the whole of humanity?

Modern Psychology certainly helps us to conceive how His experience in the Incarnation may have been fully and completely human, while yet His sinless personality went right up into that of God in a way we cannot think of in our sinful selves.

"If, or in so far as, the Holy Spirit may be said to dwell in our hearts, it was the same Holy Spirit who dwelt in Christ. The difference was not in the essence, nor yet in the mode or sphere of the indwelling, but *in the relation of the indwelling to the Person* . . . There are Divine influences at work within ourselves; and those influences touch more lightly or less lightly upon the person; but they do not *hold and possess* it, as the Deity within Him *held and possessed* the Person of the Incarnate Christ" (Sanday).

If there is truth in this view, it is not unscientific to speak either of the Godhead of Christ, or of His Universal Humanity.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CREEDS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

In this concluding chapter it is proposed to consider, very briefly, what has actually been achieved by the Christological thought of the past, and what remains for the Christology of the future to aim at.*

We have seen how early Christian thought about Jesus Christ (outside the New Testament) started with the Pauline and Johannine doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos. It put aside alike the Jewish Ebionism which regarded Jesus simply as a prophet who rose into Divinity, the Greek Gnosticism which refused to recognise that He was a real man at all, and the doctrine of Cerinthus, which was a curious blend of both. In short, it held fast to a real Incarnation.

The Christian apologists and philosophers of the second and third centuries found in the thought of the eternal Logos, incarnate in the man Jesus, a doctrine broad and philosophic enough to "convert the intellect of Europe to Christianity" (Inge); but warning notes against Greek subtlety and too much freedom in intellectual speculation were raised by Irenæus and Tertullian; and a reaction from this, in the direction of a simpler theology, gave rise to Sabellianism, which denied an essential (or immanent) Trinity, and to Arianism, which placed Christ in the middle between the Infinite and the finite, leaving the gulf unbridged.

The Council of Nicæa (325 A.D.) ruled out Arianism as heresy, and committed the Church as a whole to belief in

* In this section the writer has found help from Mackintosh's *The Person of Jesus Christ*, and Denney's *Jesus and the Gospel*, especially the concluding sections of each book; also from a series of articles on *The Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Creeds*, by Dr. A. E. Garvie, in the "Expository Times," May to September, 1912.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

the full Divinity of Christ ; and this, as a natural consequence, in the absence of a strong hold on the human personality of Jesus, left the door open for the doctrines of Apollinaris, and afterwards of Cyril and the Monophysites, which obscured or virtually denied His real humanity. That real humanity was clearly seen and strongly felt by the Antiochian leaders (known as Nestorians) ; but they could only reconcile it with His Divinity by attributing a certain *doubleness* to His person, which is at once unphilosophic and unhistorical. This was condemned by the Council at Ephesus in 431 A.D., and at the great Council of Chalcedon (451) the doctrine of the two "natures" united in a single "person" was established as the belief of the Church, and remains to this day the orthodox Christology.

The two great dangers to which this Christology has left the Church exposed have been (1) a Monophysite simplification of the problem, by which the humanity of Christ is obscured by being swallowed up in His Divinity ; and (2) an unethical intellectualism, which has made vital Christianity appear to consist in the acceptance of dogmatic formulæ, rather than in a personal Christian experience and the fruits of a Christlike life. Luther's Reformation left the first danger unmet, but (for a time at least) did much to counter the second. It was the progress of historical Criticism which, with whatever temporary extravagances, successfully regained for the Church a perception of the true humanity of her Lord ; and the work of Schleiermacher and Ritschl opened the eyes of theologians to the necessity of personal religious experience as an indispensable foundation of real Christian theology.

What has the Church gained ? Well, as was pointed out in chapter XI., the Doctrine of the Logos, though we may need a new terminology, appears to shadow forth a truth of enduring worth : that there is a self-limited and (so to say) human element in God, whereby He comes into real relations with men ; and that the Incarnation and the Cross form the culmination of this eternal self-revelation of the Divine. And, further, there is the thought to which this (if accepted) necessarily leads up, that the Divine nature is not bare formal unity, but a Unity that

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admits of inward distinctions : acceptance of the Divine-human Christ compels us to differentiate between God as the Infinite and Absolute and Timeless, and God as He comes into relations with us, by self-limitation, in space and time ; and this in turn leads on to the further differentiation of God as He reproduces His own life in the redeemed personalities of Christian men. If we are to use words at all, we cannot express these differences otherwise than as Father, Son, and Spirit, the Tri-une God.

So much, it seems, has been won for a true and enduring Christian philosophy. But the root problem of Christology remains. How are we to conceive of the union of the Divine and human in Christ, without either imagining the human absorbed into the Divine, or placing them side by side (contrary to the New Testament picture) in a divided and double personality ?

The study of the history of the Creeds is of immense value, as showing us paths of thought that must be avoided, but not as giving us a satisfactory clue by which to reach a solution of the problem. No finality has been attained ; and indeed no satisfying theory is possible in the terms of an outworn philosophy and a crude and imperfect psychology. The Creeds, valuable as historical landmarks and danger-signals, must not be allowed to become fetters, hindering the freedom of Christian thought. So orthodox a theologian as Prof. James Denney says :

“ It is faith which makes a Christian ; and when the Christian attitude of the soul to Christ is found, it must be free to raise its own problems and work out its own solutions. . . . We are bound to Christ, and would see all men so bound ; but we must leave it to Christ to establish His ascendancy over men in His own way—by the power of what He is and what He has done—and not seek to secure it beforehand by the imposition of chains of our forging.”*

What, then are the main elements that must be kept in view, as foundation factors of any true theory of the person of Jesus Christ ?

(a) First and foremost, there is the Christian experience of salvation through Christ, which historically was the

* *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 383.

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cause of the wonder as to who and what He was, out of which Christology issued. Any attempts at speculative construction must be ruled out as unhelpful, if they proceed without constant recognition of this ethical basis, on which alone any valid Christology can rest.

(b) Second, there is the fact, to which the critical study of the New Testament bears abundant witness, of the real and complete humanity of Jesus, and the undivided unity of His person. "To return to a theoretic duality of mental life in our Lord, against which all modern Christology has been a protest, is surely to sin against light."*

(c) Third, the Kenotic theories, however unsatisfactory we may find their developed form, rest upon the discovery, which (apparently) we owe to Paul (2 Cor. viii. 9), that this truly human life of Jesus was the outcome of an amazing act of self-renunciation on the part of One who had lived a larger life in the very heart of God—an act by which the Incarnation and the Cross become the supreme revelation that the "nature" of God Himself is self-sacrificing Love. A speculative difficulty there will always be in presenting clearly to our minds how a Timeless and Omnipresent Being could take upon Himself the limitations of space and time; but this difficulty may be due to the defect of our intellectual powers, and must not be allowed to blind us to the supreme moral dynamic of Christian faith. That which our ethical nature accepts as supremely good must be rooted in reality, and not in mere illusion.

(d) The idea of the Logos proved itself of priceless worth, as suggesting that the movement of man towards God was the outcome of a movement of God towards man, whereby God had always been revealing Himself towards those whose "natures" were, in their deepest being, akin to His own.

"The unification of Divine and human life in Christ may be regarded as the focus and meeting-point of two great spiritual movements of an essentially personal character. From above comes the creative initiative movement of God towards man, directed by the saving purposes of

* Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 482.

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Holy Love. From beneath comes the yearning movement of man towards God, in faith and hope and love. These two personal currents—of salvation held forth and communion longed for—join and interpenetrate in the one person Jesus Christ, in a fashion completely concrete, historical, apprehensible. In this confluent unification, which does not cease to be progressive because its *locus* has now come to be once for all within His single personality, is given the specific and final expression of an active relationship of God to the world posited with its very existence as His creation—rooted, therefore, in His eternal being. For Him redemption is recreation; in it creation comes to its final goal. The writer who first named Christ ‘The Word’ saw Him as the supreme expression of this Divine purpose for the world, so that all He utters by life and passion rests on and discloses some aspect of the eternal life as its ever-present background.”*

(e) Next, there are the modern psychological discoveries of the subconscious element in human personality, and of the extent to which our seemingly isolated personalities are charged with, and interpenetrated by, other personalities—mainly in the subconscious region—and are only to be achieved through a self-denying relation to other personalities. These discoveries, though as yet only in their infancy, may certainly throw much light on the Divine-human personality of Jesus, and eventually, it may be, even help us in conceiving the tri-une Personality of God.

(f) Lastly our modern study of Evolution may suggest to us that this highest of all problems is, like all problems of life, not static but dynamic: a question not of presenting to our minds exactly how things were at a certain point of time, but of the *process* which they manifest. Difficult as is Dorner’s theory of a “gradual incarnation,” there is in it that which seems to harmonise with our modern idea of Evolution, which carries with it assurance of the Divine immanence. The immanence of God, through the “Logos,” in the world and in human history, may be conceived as a *progressive* immanence, whereby He is ever

* Mackintosh, page 500.

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(as it were) coming nearer to the surface, becoming more plainly manifest, more apprehensible to those whom He had formed for perfection through communion with Himself.

In the world of inorganic Nature, ruled—as it seems to us—by pure physical causation, and unbroken uniformity of law, the living God is (so to say) buried deeply out of sight. In the world of Life—in the life-process with its creative activity and ever-new beginnings—He is more clearly manifest. In free human personality, self-conscious and intelligent, we begin to catch a glimpse of the image of God Himself—the spark shows the fire from which it has come. Most of all, the One human Life which was fully possessed and dominated by the conscious presence of God, reveals at once His nature and the goal at which the whole process of Evolution is aiming. And that human life itself would seem to have embodied the living God more and more fully and completely, as the Son “learned obedience through the things that He suffered” (Heb. v. 8); as He submitted Himself to the moral conflict, yielded up His human life in the struggle with evil, and brought out of death a new dynamic whereby mankind could live the life of God.

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